

The
INVADER'S SON

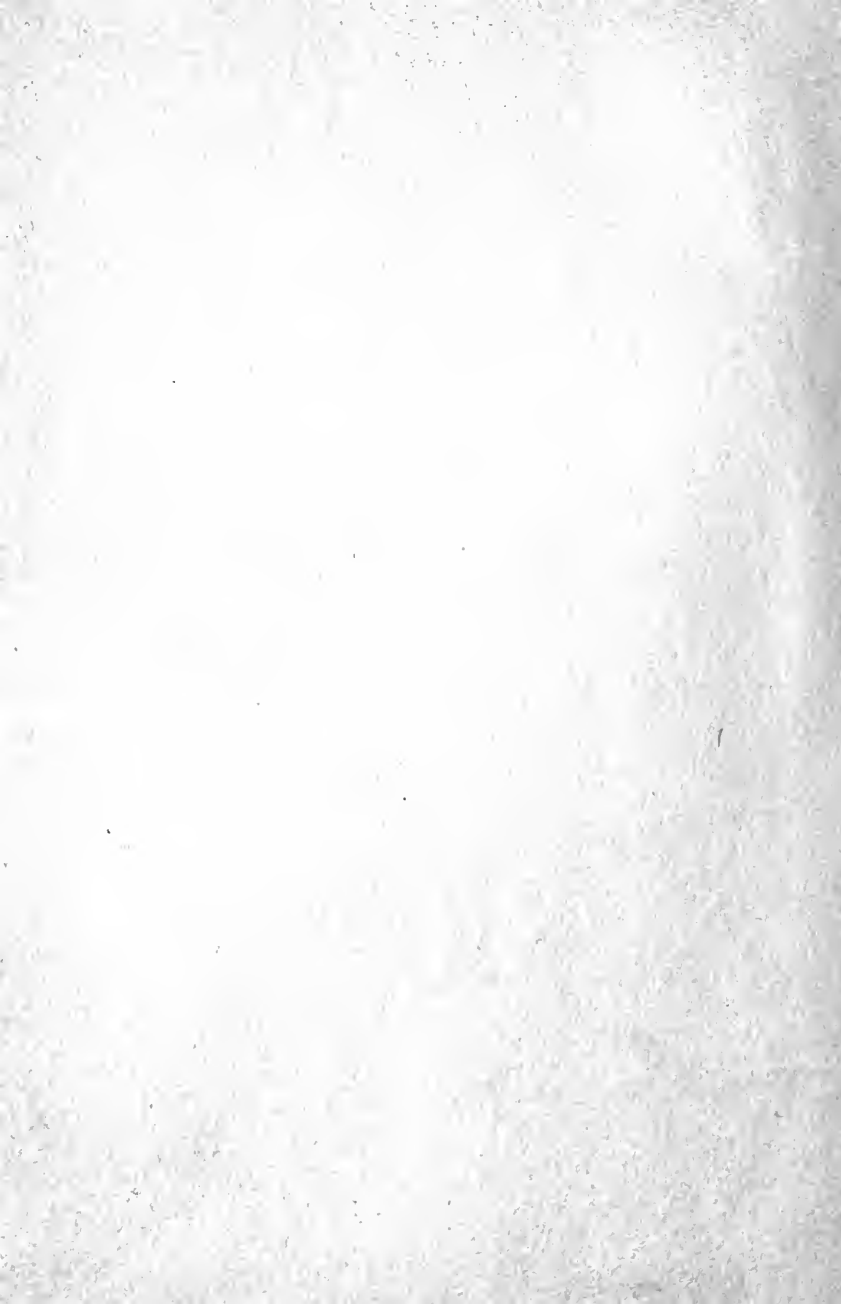
William Antony Kennedy





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THE INVADER'S SON

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The
INVADER'S SON

BY
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"As Britons See It," "The Making of Peter Dunn,"
"The Master of Bonne Terre," etc.

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THE INVADER'S SON

CHAPTER I

THE WEDDING

"AND to-morrow is my wedding day!" Hermance Morestier exclaimed as she sprang upon the parapet in the first sunbeams of a morning late in the month of July. "Ha! the maids in the village are glad with me—they love me much now; but not a year ago, when Raoul—my gay and handsome Raoul—came back from the army. Then they were jealous. And, why not?—he would have been a prize for any of them. But I am lucky! Yes; Yvonne, Antoinette, Marie—and poor little Eloise!—they all wanted him!"

The clear, rippling sounds of Hermance's voice were sent back to her in echo from across the old moat, and she laughed so merrily that a covey of pigeons started up from the ruined battlements at her feet.

Almost daily, since the age of six, she had climbed the ancient ladder to the turreted roof of the château that had been the home of her family for five centuries, to look out on the country, far and wide, and to amuse herself with the echo. Its faithful reproductions always thrilled her strangely, and, as a child, she often wondered at the phenom-

anon—even sometimes chaffed the little girl who dared to mock her.

However, on this occasion, she unconsciously expressed aloud the secret of her heart. She was surprised to hear the precious words repeated in the still, crisp atmosphere. She made a pretty menacing gesture at her friends—the big, brown hills over the way,—and scrambled further out on the broad coping to inhale the harvest-scented air from the fields. Her light auburn hair floated in the breeze. The pink flush of perfect health mounted to her cheeks. Delicately moulded features and a mouth that one would kiss set her apart at once as beautiful. Raoul had often told Hermance of this desirable gift of the gods. And she was guilty of admiring in the mirror, when quite alone, her high prominent forehead, bright bewitching blue eyes, shapely head finely poised on a graceful, velvety, white neck. As she stood thus, almost dizzy in the zenith of happiness that comes to a good girl at such a time, she was more comely than ever before. A flowing garment of pea-green lawn suited her well—it flapped out behind, silhouetting the outlines of her rounded, divinely carved form against the cloudless canopy of the heavens. Her nebulous charms of grace and natural vivaciousness gave her the right to be called the loveliest young woman in that part of Northern France.

But Hermance was only one of the strugglers with poverty in that out-of-way place. The Mo-

restier lineage counted for nothing more than kindly respect from the peasants. Hermance and her mother were the remaining representatives of the family, and while inhabiting the heavily mortgaged château of their forefathers, they barely managed to live on the income derived from taking in dress-making. All the grand rooms of the old structure, except four they occupied, were dilapidated and given over to bats and swallows. In fact, part of the building had been burned out during the Franco-Prussian War, at which time the fortune of the family was lost. Hermance's father, the only survivor of the long line, an invalid, had not been able to repair the château, and, of course, he had not gathered in any store of material things to leave his wife and daughter. Hence the huge pile of ivy-clad stone was crumbling away slowly on the side of the heights overlooking the Oise River.

The music of youth in Hermance's heart that particular morning was the prospect of her marriage with Raoul Beauvais. She had been selected by him out of the beckoning flock of eligible maidens in the neighborhood. This latter fact and the knowledge that he led all the other young men in looks and praiseworthy qualities made her proud as well as happy.

Raoul's grandfather was killed at Sedan, in the War of 1870, as also was Hermance's, and his father and mother had both died about the time he began to walk. The schoolmaster in the par-

ish brought up the orphan nearly to manhood, when he died also, leaving Raoul to get on as best he could.

The life Raoul lived for the next four years was hard, but he managed somehow to endure. Later he had to serve the required time in the French Army. A soldier's training benefited him in more ways than one—he achieved considerable renown as an accomplished horseman and athlete. His feats attracted the attention of a wealthy business man in Paris. This brought about acquaintanceship, and later he became Raoul's friend.

Some time after Raoul returned to the Oise district, his admirer, Henri Galarre, proprietor of the *Maison Galarre*, Paris, offered him a lucrative position in his department store. The vacancy would occur in the first days of August, and Raoul and Hermance had decided to get married and start together in the Capital of France. To the young lovers—she was twenty and he just past twenty-five,—it would be a step up, and there were also possibilities and the hope that they might save earnings and clear the ruined Morestier château of debt; they might even restore it to its former grandeur.

Therefore, all together, it was no wonder that Hermance rejoiced. For the first time the gleams of a perfect day were bursting upon her starved imagination. When she came up for her early morning inspection of the familiar landscape, the whole world seemed aglitter with gold. In fact, all

of her peasant and village intimates, of whom she was one in sympathy and feeling, rejoiced with her. With these lowly associates Raoul was also a favorite. He had been poor and lonely with them, had toiled in the fields in blouses, had been a jolly companion on holiday outings, and gay in the cafés, and there was not a peasant girl in the region he had not taken for a row on the dark pools of the Oise. When his tall, strongly-built, upright figure appeared in the village streets, or in rural lanes, it was a signal for young and old to gather about to share his genial smiles. Everyone liked to hear him talk. His pleasant sunburnt face cheered many a household; his superior domestic knowledge, his counsel and learning and sound judgment, made him a sort of demigod to small householders in trouble; and out of his wages, he relieved much suffering among the poor. "Ah! Raoul—big, strong Raoul,—everybody's friend, is just the husband for Hermance," they all declared in a burst of genuine approval.

Costumes kept for special occasions were brought from rafter lofts and mended and brushed for the wedding. Heavy leather shoes were greased and rubbed with the polisher. Mothers made over dresses for their daughters. River men—also attached to Raoul, boyhood companions of his,—made a fairly good imitation Roman galley of one of the barges, to take the bridal couple on a trip to the Great Forest. Even Father Pelletier suggested that the

church might be decorated for the ceremony—it was done by willing hands. The morrow, then, would be a memorable day in the lives of those who dwelt in that lovely paradise of peace and contentment.

Hermance, on her high perch, raised bare, plump arms to shade her eyes, and looked out on waving expanses of yellow grain. Then she let her gaze wander over to the quaint village of Ste. Genevieve, which lay huddled on the banks of the Oise far below. There she had been educated in the Convent of the Sacred Heart, and there, too, had flitted by the care-free days of her childhood. She knew every curious street and walk, the exact pattern of each gate, and could call most of the inhabitants by name. She had lived the life of those simple folk, and shared their periods of sorrow and fitful spells of happiness. For several minutes Hermance stood quite still, studying and reviewing the groups of low, weather-soiled stone and brick houses, with dingy red tile roofs, and fell into a reverie of the tales they had to transmit—could they but be stirred to the gift of tongues. She could imagine what the girls and their mothers were doing within—she could see their faces. A sigh escaped her as she thought of the squalid scantiness of Rene Gidon's home. Over by the mill on the river was Grand-mère Dauphin's cozy cottage. A smile played over Hermance's countenance as she remembered the hot cakes she used to eat from the old dame's griddle.

There were a few stragglers now in the streets

and queer byways. Hermance picked them out—Jean, the miller's son, who had three times begged her to marry him; Jules, the milkman, going for his cart; Caddo Felon, the bent and tottery shoemaker, who made coarse boots and repaired the sabots; then there went along hurriedly fair-haired Anson Joumonville, the youthful doctor, who had taken over his rheumatic father's practice—he was probably going to see Madame Garronne;—she must be worse with her broken hip. The nearness of the people and everything in the village to Hermance caused her to clasp her hands impulsively to her bosom.

Then as the wheel of memory reversed rapidly, she recalled the time when she had run swiftly on garden walls, all the river boys and girls spectators, the entire distance from the wharf to the church, closely pursued by Anson Joumonville, then a lad of ten, who dangled before him, on a stick, an ugly crawfish. At the vestry entrance, Father Pelletier was just coming out, and to elude her tormentor, she had jumped off into the outstretched arms of the priest. The venerable guardian of souls chuckled triumphantly, and threatened the chagrined boy with his cane. It had been twelve years since that incident, and yet she heard the boisterous laughter and saw the peril of the moment as though the happening was taking place again. Oh, what a mischievous pest!—that Anson. And within the past year, it was he, the dashing young physician,

who had made Raoul jealous. "Was I not mean!"—she confessed to herself, remembering that she had pretended a liking for Dr. Joumonville to tease her lover.

Then, as if favored by a lifting of the impenetrable veil, she seemed to get a glimpse of the future, when Dr. Joumonville would be a hand reached out in troubled waters to her and Raoul.

Hermance looked after the doctor again, and involuntarily held out her hands towards him. When he disappeared behind a block of shanties, she ran to another part of the half-tumbled ruins to survey the winding, silvery thread of the river Oise.

Over there the valley swarmed with French soldiers. Bayonets and accouterments of war flashed ominously in the light of newborn day. As far as one could see, they came on as though to reinforce a weakened battle line. Thousands upon thousands came pouring through the quiet country roads. What could it mean? Hermance leaned over the edge of a small tower to make sure she was not dreaming. No; she had not seen a vision—the south horizon bristled with armed troops, and those nearest to her had about them a businesslike grimness that struck terror to her heart.

Why so large an army? Why had Raoul not apprised her of this military movement?

While she waited like a scared bird, strains of the martial music of France arose, quick and stir-

ring, from the green-hedged highways. Then went up lusty cheers and cries of "*Vive la France.*" Heads began to pop out of windows and doors in Ste. Genevieve. Peasants trudging to work in vineyards mounted walls and hillocks to hail the flag of the Republic. A man, with hands gesticulating to the bedlam of patriotic demonstration, was running bareheaded through the common. He had the stride and bearing of Raoul. Hermance rushed to the rude stairway, and all but tumbled down to meet him at the door.

"Hermance!" he said hoarsely, a blaze of excitement flaring his face.

"War! Raoul—I know it; I feel it—is it war?"

"The bomb has burst."

"Germans!" gasped Madame Morestier, running forward.

"Yes; war!" Raoul's voice trembled with emotion. "It's come. France is afire—the Germans again. The Great War has begun. I've told you it would come. German guns have started the slaughter. The world's wornout machinery has been jammed by the first shot. In less than a month—in a week, the nations of Europe will swell the gigantic struggle. Caesar, Charlemagne,—Napoleon never imagined such a war as this will be. The Germans now enter Belgium. France must fight. England and Russia must fight. Later, America will come in. The magnificent army of the Republic of France is mobilized. I'm called—see

my card. Yonder soldiers go to the frontier to be ready for battle!"

His words stopped to flow, and for a moment he clutched Hermance's hands and poured his soul's yearning into hers through the windows God has provided for lovers.

"*Mon Dieu! mes enfants!*" cried the old mother. "And they will come this way—the terrible Germans! Tell me, truly, Raoul, is it war?"

"War!"

The horrifying jar of the French equivalent sent a shiver through the aged lady, who remembered the terrors that sunk talons into the land in 1870.

Again Raoul drew from his pocket a slip of paper and shrugged his shoulders.

"It's true, *ma mère!*—see Raoul's order to join his regiment!" said Hermance, taking the paper and reading it quickly the second time.

"Yes, *ma chère!*" said Raoul, proudly, "It is my order to go. I leave at noon. After twelve o'clock to-day, not one able-bodied man will be left in Ste. Genevieve—every one must go, who is of the age to fight."

Raoul waited. He knew that Hermance would show the true spirit of the French.

"And if I were only a man!" she cried, choking down her rising emotions.

"I knew you'd say it!" he shouted. "I knew you'd put France first!" He embraced her enthusiastically, caressing her hair with his brawny hand.

"Now kiss me, Hermance. Tell me you'll marry me at eleven this morning."

Although she was laughing when she pulled him over to kiss his lips, tears sparkled in her eyes.

"Yes, Raoul; I'll marry you at once. I'm quite prepared. It's noble of you to wish it finished before you go."

Madame Morestier, stately and impressive, went to Raoul and kissed him on the brow.

And so it was arranged. Amid the excitement of the villagers, while soldiers and artillery clattered through crooked streets, willing runners spread news of the hurried wedding. Exactly when the chimes of the clock in the church tower began to announce the hour, a group of friends gathered in the pews to witness the sacred blessing of the aged priest. Raoul and Hermance knelt before the altar and repeated the indissoluble vows that made them husband and wife. Theirs had been a happy courtship. The wedding had come at the moment when they were ushered into the hard realities of life.

As Father Pelletier stood with outspread hands, commending them to the tender mercies of the Almighty, the majestic roll of "*La Marseillaise*" filled the somber interior of God's house and reverberated from transept to choir. Peasants and villagers in the front seats were electrified. The Reverend Father raised his voice above the rattle of drums, and specially charged them to uphold the honor of France, the homeland of ancestors who

had shed their blood on the battlefield of Sedan. "Bear you with patience and fortitude whatever may befall you in this terrible war, now commencing—you, Raoul, my son, must endure the belching fire of cannon; and you, Hermance, my daughter, stand steadfast. The woman who fears God has her work to do. Remember, Hermance, you have to suffer for France. You will be tried to the last degree, but be brave under the mailed fist of brutality; it will be your offering at the shrine of liberty."

Hermance perceived the spirit of prophecy in the saying of the white-haired man of the church. A chill of fear quickened her heartbeats. Her premonition of the early morning regarding the future friendship of Dr. Joumonville came to her mind. The warning repeated begot conviction. Her face blanched and she became grave in arousing determination. Raoul had told her she was a true daughter of France—she had wished to be a man that she might go forth to war. She accepted the rôle prepared for her by Fate, and said aloud: "All this I vow to do!"

Within a half hour thereafter, the young husband and his pretty bride parted at the station—he to go to the Armageddon to fight for the freedom of the world; she to wait and suffer and pray. Hermance ran apace with the moving train, that she might the longer hold his hand and drink from his eyes the elixir of love. She flogged her heart to appear gay—her expressions of hope could not con-

ceal an undertow of dread, but she endeavored to leave with him a token of brightness to cheer him on his way.

Raoul waved his handkerchief to her until the puffing locomotive carried him around the curve and out of sight.

Excited and uncertain what to do next, Hermance turned back to the party that had followed them from the church door. Her tears now flowed freely—she could not control her feelings. It seemed that a load of sorrow had descended upon her shoulders.

But there were others who wept with her—many for her sake; and mothers and sisters grieved after their loved ones. Then a hush settled down upon those who hung about the tiny station, as though Death had passed them by, lapping up in whirlwind all the men of that peaceful community.

"Don't cry, Hermance," said *Grand'mère* Dauphin, pleadingly; "François has gone, too. My good man went thus to the other war,—and never came back. You can learn to stand it with the rest of us—and let us hope that France will avenge her wrongs."

"Ah, I'm here, my daughter, Hermance." Old Dr. Joumonville swung out of the group on his crutches. "I sent Anson to fight—I'd have gone, too, but for these pesky things. However, someone will have to look after the ills of Ste. Genevieve during the war, and I shall do it."

"I told my boy," put in Madame Savoir, "it'd be far better for him to go to war than to spend his time drinking all day and disturbing the good folk of nights."

This announcement was welcomed by the villagers, and in spite of general gloom, sighs of relief escaped from several.

"It's not so bad," said Roger, the jester. "War is war, and must needs be; but we're French." He then did a bit of a dance, bringing his wooden leg down with such a singular curve each time that the company soon began to laugh.

"Ah, ladies and—and the few old smashed-up gentlemen, know you not that there is a bride waiting for escort home. Come now, you Caddo Felon, have you forgot to sing? *Mon Dieu*, a wedding without a procession—and music. That will never do!"

So said Roger, proud that he had cast off the pall of sadness. He hustled the crowd into line, taking unto himself the honor of marching with Hermance. Dogs began barking as the peasant girls, led by old Felon, struck up the wedding song of ancient Picardy. Off they went, down the narrow walled street, all trying to keep up the hop-and-skip joy dance.

The last soldier had disappeared towards Hirson. Humble inhabitants left behind to concern themselves with other things and keep up the quaint life of Ste. Genevieve joined the merrymakers. The

wedding march soon became popular, everybody turning out to swell the volume of laughter and song. The village's population was now less than a hundred, not counting the few children. And the majority of these was women. The men who did not go to war were old and crippled. Therefore, it was a grotesque line that wormed its tortuous way across the high stone bridge towards Château Morestier. Halt and maimed, rheumatic and palsied, stooped and tottering; drab-clad, washed-out dames, the frost of gray hairs and the bronzed and non-descript faces strikingly marked in contrast with the florid bloom of the vineyard girls, were all there rollicking and living in the present. To the onlooker, the scene was not without a pathetic touch—but dominating tragedy, as ever before, the wonderful French spirit of resignation had triumphed in these simple hearts. In the face of disaster, they could sing and dance.

That evening when the sting of summer heat had been lessened by a wave of fresh air from the forests, those patient and satisfied people went trooping in twos and threes to the crumbing château, carrying huge baskets that contained viands and dainties and bottles of wine for the wedding supper. Hermance's was the first wedding of war times, and it must be celebrated according to the customs of Picardy. A half score of long-legged, corduroy-trousered lads, and swathy matrons in plenty, had labored during the afternoon to clear

the rubbish and dust from the salon of General Jacques Morestier's days, for the neighbors must gather there at night to wish the bride a happy journey—and to dine and dance. And by and by, when the stars peeped out of their coverlet of blue, hundreds of candles set on window-plates, in wall racks, and displayed in old-fashioned, tarnished chandeliers, flickered far up on the heights, a semblance of the magnificence of a bygone age.

CHAPTER II

AN INVADER'S WRONG

IN the first week of August, dark clouds that had been gathering for forty years hovered low over Europe and began pouring out fire of wrath. Thunders of war splintered the Firmament of Peace in Belgium. Armies of millions rushed to the theatre of slaughter.

Liège succumbed to the German hordes. Powerful Krupp howitzers demolished the forts of Namur. The battles of Mons and Charleroi overshadowed the military holocausts of history. Louvain was sacked and left in charred ruins, and Antwerp occupied that the Prussian pistol might be pointed at England's head. Then William II. of Germany, the War Lord of 1914, stood on the crest of the Ardennes and issued the command: "On to Paris!"

Death-dealing fusillades of multitudes spread out over a swath two hundred and fifty miles wide, from Alsace-Lorraine to the sea, and double lines of cold, merciless steel clashed and slew the best manhood of nations. Waters of the Meuse and Aisne were streaked with human blood. The overwhelmed forces of the Allies backed slowly before the stolid but victorious onslaught of the German phalanx. Shaded lanes, cottage flecked valleys, wooded hills, and picturesque highlands and plains

heard again the scream of shells and the hissing phit of rifle fire. Smoking piles of ruins, carcasses of horses, shallow trenches clogged with dead and dying men, church spires broken off and bored through by cannon balls, frightened women and children kneeling about roadside shrines in the small hours of night; cries and moans in the dank darkness marked the wake of the horrors of war not seen, not described in the journals of the day, and not accompanied by glorious music as in the heroic past. Despite the scorching heat of midsummer, the advance by the last days of August had brought the vast host of Huns into the borders of fair France. And then, steadily through sunshine and night-time, artillery bombardments shook the earth. Crackling flames of destruction went on unceasingly, lapping up villages and towns famous in the annals of civilization. Out of the murrain of rapine and murder, the pitiful wails of innocent peasants arose unheeded.

In the pell-mell of madness, clattering hoofs of war horses and wheezing gasoline motors, dust covered and scarred, ran forward wildly, dragging munition wagons and provision vans. Red Cross trains and lorries worked back the dead and wounded from the fray. The terrible business rushed on and on, as uncontrollable as the muddy flood that has broken its dam. Mediaeval savagery swept the tenets of Christianity aside and ruthlessly laid waste thatched hut, humble home, and

age-honored château. No city or peaceful hamlet escaped the smashing tread of the destroyers.

Ste. Genevieve lay in the path of fury. One evening, while the western horizon yet glowed from the setting of a young autumnal sun, myriads of spiked helmets appeared in the north. Helpless inhabitants in the village and laborers in nearby hay fields saw the columns of dust arising spiral-like into the heavens, and said: "It rains to-morrow. Let us hasten." But, alas! instead of the cooling vapors, the byways and slopes and upper banks of the Oise soon became a living, moving, steaming mass of dull gray uniforms—Prussians and Bavarians were mounted and heavy-booted for war, and came smothering all before them like a thick bed of smoking lava. Before the astonished people could comprehend the meaning, clanking swords and the raucous commands of the enemy filled the air. Bugle calls and galloping officers strung out columns round about the town, and the cohorts of modern Attila settled down for the night.

Women screamed and sought their homes in terror. Quickly as panic spread, there was hastening to and fro with bundles and babies and muffled orders were given to fetch the carts and wheelbarrows, preparatory to making an exit. The scanty homes were shuttered, and soon the sorry-looking innocents emerged to be hustled and bustled in the streets and roads. But they were not to be allowed to flee to the hills and swamps. The coarse conqueror

sent them back to their houses. They were assured of life—if they obeyed. The tired, foot-sore soldiers needed food and drink—the French dogs should feed them immediately,—and hurry! So the Imperial Edict ran.

Outposts were established both up and down the river Oise—and on the distant heights and across the valleys and table-lands. Thousands upon multiplied thousands of troops rolled in from everywhere, covering the face of the earth in perfect order. Within an hour the uproar and noise of the entry had ceased. The most exacting military discipline prevailed. Sentries paced their beats. Wheeled army kitchens were quickly run up among the men, and cooks and attendants began distributing soup and hot coffee. Horses drank their fill from the river, and were tethered in rows and groups and fed. Then the tired soldiers sat down to wait for the evening meal.

Officers ordered the villagers to provide certain foods, which were forthcoming in the hope that the anger of the War Lords might be appeased. Scared women and hobbling men of Ste. Genevieve hustled here and there trying as best they could to obey military mandates.

And the while, irrepressible children ventured cautiously among the lancers and Uhlans—to watch them eat. They regarded the invaders as monsters from another planet. One now and again among the adventurous boys made bold to finger a sabre

or a bayonet—to see if they were sharp. As timidity vanished, the little fellows and their sisters advanced deeper into the enemy's camp. When, lo! a tiny brown-cheeked girl was snatched up by a big Westphalian and trotted on his knee! He meant to be kind—and the young band of Gauls understood him. It must be safe, therefore, and tots and ragamuffins wandered all about, eyeing shrewdly the spoilers of their country.

Soldiers will be soldiers, whatever may be their nationality, and naturally these grosser ones counted it a part of their sport to rifle wine cellars. Hence the few stores of rare vintages were pillaged. Also the houses were searched for firearms—and, of course, some trifles found havens in soldiers' pockets.

One old Frenchman, on seeing his champagne passing into other hands—without the formalities of sale—objected vigorously, and was wantonly shot. This incident loosed the leashes of brutes of the dark ages, and for slight offenses three more men were killed—two of them for attempting to conceal a rusty sword, a relic of the first Prussian war. The victims' cottages having been set on fire, murder ceased for the moment to make way for some new sordid fancy. Such manifestations of savagery and disregard of private lives and property were sufficient to cause the people to quake with fear—and probably prevented further atrocities by compelling strict compliance with all orders.

Among those who served the boches were Hermance and her mother from the Château Morestier. As they went in and out among the resting bands of troopers, a young officer's amorous eyes noted the beauty of shy Madame Beauvais. He asked of her a second and a third cup of coffee that he might feast his sodden senses upon her charms. Hermance shuddered and tried to avoid him, but he persisted to the point of rudeness, then spoke to her kindly as if wishing to allay her suspicions. Although her heart still pounded in her bosom, she kept on performing the task imposed, lest he detect that she dreaded him. His politeness did not put her at ease. She recognized that his fluent French and veneer of manners placed him in some corner of the German aristocracy—she also noticed that he was a fine, well-set-up specimen of the barbarous Teuton race,—probably not more than twenty-six years of age. Perhaps he was less a beast than the common goose-stepper, but she breathed more freely when she had been dismissed and told to go home.

Count von Essenhendel, for that was the officer's name, called his orderly, and said: "Follow the young woman to her door; make the usual inquiries, and report at once." He then resumed conversation with hilarious companions, and called for another round of champagne taken from old Gambrenant's cellar.

Hermance paused at her mother's side before the

entrance of the château to look down upon the invaders. She cast a questioning glance at Madame Morestier as a smart soldier laid his hand on gate latch and entered without heeding their presence.

"Your name, please," he said, taking from his pocket a book and pencil.

"Madame Morestier and Madame Beauvais," replied Hermance.

"Any men in the house?"

"None—my husband is in the French army."

"Members in your household?" continued the orderly, as if bored—"also servants?"

"Two—Mother and I." Hermance's voice trembled.

The pompous German looked surprised—but said mechanically: "See that you do not leave the house until after sunrise to-morrow, unless bidden. The penalty is death."

He chalked a large shield on the door post, and drew an arrow through it. His lip curled as he leered at the young wife before departing. Hermance clenched her hands as she watched him go jauntily down the slope.

"Oh, Mother!" she cried, as soon as the soldier was out of hearing, "I'm afraid. What's this mark? An officer down there, who persisted in talking to me, wears that emblem on his coat."

"Ah, my child, we are not safe. But I see nothing of awe in this simple sign—perhaps he's the commanding officer, and this mark merely shows

that our house has been brought under his control. You must not show fear."

"I'm a Frenchwoman, Mother. My dear Raoul is fighting for our beloved land—ah, and what may not have happened to him! I'm not afraid to meet whatever hardships may be imposed upon us."

White-flecked storm clouds were racing across the heavens.

"Within and above, then, to our rooms. The Blessed Virgin protect us," said the good mother, making a show of courage. But inwardly she sensed danger.

At ten o'clock, the two lonely women in the Château Morestier extinguished their candles and crept to bed. The night was dark, and it had begun to rain. Gusts of wind rattled and banged hanging blinds in the deserted part of the building—and stealing through the lulls in the warning of the elements came bursts of laughter and disgusting ribaldry from drunken revelries on the river banks below. Neither of the women slept.

Down in Ste. Genevieve's single café an orgy was in progress. Broken bottles were strewn about the floor. Two of the party snored under a wide oak table. Several others lolled about the bar, singing facetious songs.

Dominant in this orgy of officers was Count von Essenhendel. He carried his liquor like a gentleman, and regarded with disgust the men about him who had made beasts of themselves. He twisted his

blond mustache reflectively for a moment, yawned, and fumbled in his pocket for the slip of paper his orderly had handed him earlier in the evening.

"Madame Beauvais," he read by the reddish flame of the lamp beside him. "Husband in the French army—mother and young wife alone in a big château." The brute of voluptuous manhood snubbed his conscience and gloated out of his eyes. He recounted other châteaux he had previously had marked with the shield and arrow, as precincts specially set aside for himself. He regarded his gold watch for a second, and summoned his orderly who slept soundly in the corner.

"Show me the way, soldier."

The orderly rubbed his eyes, touched his brow stiffly, and walked out before his master.

* * * * *

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve—" Hermance counted the strokes of the clock in the steeple of *L'église de St. Joseph*.

"Mother, are you awake?" she asked.

"Yes; have you been resting?"

"No." Then after a pause Hermance added: "I have been thinking of Raoul. I wonder where he is to-night. He has not written since he went away on our wedding day."

"He has had no chance to write, my child."

"I know, I know, Mother. Only I wish——"

"What do you wish, Hermance?"

"I wish he might have been my—my husband for just one week."

Madame Morestier understood. She got up and went to her daughter, and sat for a minute stroking her hair.

"You're nervous, Hermance. Do try and be calm." But the mother could feel hot tears falling upon her hand.

The crunch of hobnailed boots was heard on the gravel walk in the front garden! Hermance sprang to the window and pulled up the wooden blind.

Without was as light as day—for the big mill by the high bridge had been fired by the invaders, and mammoth flames wrapped it about and leaped angrily into space. Torrents of rain still fell, but the glare from the mill turned the water into glassy sheets. Hermance tiptoed to see below. Four men approached the entrance door, and six others paced in twos before the outer wall, their helmets adrip and glistening in the downpour. They looked sullen and menacing with their shouldered guns. Following the four men in the garden was the officer who had annoyed her in the evening!

"Mother, Mother!—see! they come!"

Three heavy tugs at the doorbell made quick response imperative.

"I'll answer, Hermance. Remain and be quiet. I shall say——"

Without completing her sentence, Madame Morestier flung a greatcloak over her nightdress and

ran down the three flights of stairs as fast as she could.

There was a brief interval of bluff, short commands below, which Hermance could not make out, and then men's feet began ascending the stone steps. She stood like a statue in the middle of the floor, her face blanched and her hands clutched hard over her bosom.

One of the four men flashed a lantern in the dark room adjoining, as someone entered, and said in bad French, evidently addressing Madame Morestier:

"Dress quickly, madame. You only will be required to nurse the ill soldiers. Young madame will rest here."

Hermance heard her mother sob aloud as she hesitated.

"You go then without dress," said the same voice. The four seemed to crowd in at the side door. Two of them seized the old lady and bundled her off along the hallway.

Count Essenhendel entered Hermance's room, struck a match, deliberately lit a candle on the table, then walked back to the door, locked it, and put the key into his pocket.

Hermance, who had been looking on in wide-eyed amazement, sprang forward and screamed. She wrestled with him for the key until every piece of furniture in the room had either been knocked over or shoved to one side. At last when he held her wrists in iron grip, and every ounce of her strength had gone, she fell in a swoon at his feet.

CHAPTER III

THE BATTLE OF THE RIVERS

ON AND on went the German war machine with its unnumbered hundreds of thousands, driving before it the French and English armies, and leaving consternation behind, until by the 6th of September, Generals Von Kluck and Von Bülow were within a day's march of the main fortifications of Paris. The Kaiser's order to take the French capital had all but been accomplished. The ten days' advance from Belgium to the gates of Paris had alarmed Europe—and France hastily moved her departments of State to Bordeaux. Millions of invading Huns with their perfect equipment broke all previous military records in nearly everything they did. But then came the check to the Germans near Coulommiers. On September 7th, according to prophecy, as many believed, the tide turned.

The Allies bent back the head of the serpent in the north, where it was already licking its tongue at the gay city on the Seine. In the south, the Germans began retreating along a line as far below as Châlons. Their revenge was let loose on Senlis of history. And smarting from the hurling back blow, chagrin and uncontrolled anger unchained the savagery of Attila's reign, to sack and ruin all the cities that lay in the long backward sweep. If they

could not conquer, they would leave their marks on France.

“Plus à Paris—plus à Paris!”

The dream of William II. was ended. The picture became tragic—that of the War Lord watching on the hills near Nancy; the man who had explored every field of knowledge and harbored every ambition known to the realms of kings, until he imagined that the time had come for him, as the Chosen Field Marshal of God, to take charge of Europe and govern actually as his Prussian ideals dictated: but now the chosen among modern monarchs, self-appointed emissary of Providence, must look out on retreating German hordes and only the mirage of his promised land.

In the common ranks of the French along the Marne, Raoul Beauvais followed the routed Huns with his rifle. He fought in the trenches and charged with his bayonet. Often his uniform was red with blood from the field of carnage. Sometimes he lay with the unknown thousands of his faithful race for hours at a time on the brow of an elevation, listening to the whining song of shells and the energetic sputter of machine guns, and fearful of explosions, until he was nearly deaf and half crazed. The reality of war sprawled unmasked about him. He saw death become as casual and unnoticed as the passing of flowers in the summer. Men and horses lay rotting side by side, the bodies of one

creation apparently of as little concern to the world as the other. Fertile fields, intended to produce and feed the poor, were furrowed by bursting bombs, ploughed by the swift skimming of half-ton projectiles, and disfigured with zigzag ditches for protection, which later became the graves of those who had sheltered in them. The occupation of peasants had been changed from that of cultivating the soil to burying the dead.

Raoul saw it all and wondered. But thoughts of a young wife up in the Oise valley, surrounded and enveloped by the enemy, the memory of his home village, the peaceful hills and plains, the needs of fair France in her cry for protection, made his faith steadfast and his courage unbounded to push forward and fight for the rights of men and the freedom of the world. Again and again he fired with his rifle until it became too hot to touch, when he would throw it away and pick up one still gripped by some François's cold hands.

The command in which Raoul fought followed the Germans to Rheims. His first view of the old Roman city from the heights on the south more than fulfilled the descriptions he had read, and the personal touches of experiences, related to him by the schoolmaster in Ste. Genevieve. There it lay, surrounded by a wooded circle of hills. He ran his eyes over the broad, scattered city of trees and houses, until they rested on the great landmark, the gray stone cathedral with its two huge towers of

marvelous handiwork. He was fatigued almost beyond endurance, and suffered excruciating pains from a shrapnel wound on his shoulder, but he recalled an encomium on the wonderful monument of the church, written by Auguste Rodin, which he had clipped from a newspaper passed to him by a generous correspondent :

“Vue de trois quarts, la cathédrale de Reims évoque une grande figure de femme agenouillée, en prière. C’est le sens que donne la forme de la console. Du même point de vue j’observe que la cathédrale monte comme une flamme.

“Je m’arrête devant le portail.

“Ces figures de Saints, vraiment capables de lancer la foudre ! Ces serviteurs, humbles, qui tiennent le Livre ! Cette grande figure majestueuse de femme : la Loi !

L’admirable Saint-Denis du portail Nord ! Il porte sa tête dans sa main et deux anges, à la place de la tête, soutiennent une couronne. M’est-il permis de voir là un symbole ? Celui-ci : les idées coupées, interrompues dans leur essor se rejoindront plus tard et règneront un jour, tout un jour qui n’aura pas de fin !”

But it had been destroyed ! The one church structure, the one cathedral revered by the world, had been smashed by German shells. Flames had consumed the beauty of six centuries’ building. Even while Raoul looked on, the scream of a shell was heard over the top of the opposite hills, and a second later, it crashed into the smoking ruins to send heavenward a cloud of spark-lit dust. The towers still stood, also the walls and roof in parts, but they

were blackened and defaced. Marvelous carvings dropped to the streets in chunks. Statues of saints and of the Savior were broken in twain. The Holy Altar was crushed and covered with fire-bleached plaster. The great rose window, an art treasure of immense value, had been shattered like the coarse glass in Belgian factory roofs! And stupendous barkings of steel muzzles still continued to thrust in another and yet another mass of loaded metal to make the destruction complete!

Resolutely the determined French knocked and pushed and pounded away until Rheims was left in the distance, and despite the chilling rains of autumn, the armies of both sides floundered and fought in the network of the Marne, the Vosges, the Aisne, and the Oise. That was the beginning of the Battle of the Rivers.

No one can say just when it began, no one will ever be able to write all that happened in those weary weeks and months; nor will anyone ever be able to say to a certainty what was gained. The Powers of Europe sent several millions of men into those cold marshes and waters to wade and wallow and kill while the rest of the world passed a comfortable winter. About the only concern at the time was the hope that a sufficient number would be left in the spring to make a respectable finish of the muddle that had neither head nor tail.

In one of the teeth and toe-nail night assaults north of Soissons, when it was drizzling drops of

melted ice, and the darkness made all men alike, Raoul Beauvais rammed and jammed with the others. Furious charges were made back and forth over a rough piece of high, forest-covered ground, and there French and Germans died in heaps—sometimes each with his bayonet through the other. Heavy artillery fire from both sides sent in shells to spread momentary flashes of light—and death. Raoul engaged an enemy on the brink of a trench the command was seeking to capture. Just then a sweeping volley from riflemen cleared the ground, leaving the stalwart Frank descendant from old Picardy and a Teuton giant to fight alone.

The Teuton, an officer, had lost his sword in the bloody attacks, and fought with a lance he had picked up in the rush. Raoul parried the lance with his bayonet. The brow veins of both stood out as they taxed each other to the maximum. Then a spent cannon ball wiped the weapons from their hands, and the sudden force of the wrench cast the antagonists headlong into the deep tiled pit.

The trench was empty. To one side, a temporary resting place hollowed out in the bank, contained a half-burned lighted candle. There was not a gun to be had—neither possessed a knife; nor were stones handy to serve as clubs. Both men were naked to their waists, from scrimmages in wire entanglements. By the rays of the quiet yellow blaze from the candle in the mud wall, the two maddened giants glared at one another for a moment, then

leaped together in a knotted clinch. Muscles strained muscles; hate met hate with looks of murder. Deadlocked in even strength, they rolled over to gnash and struggle in the oozy slush at the bottom of the ditch.

On the battlefield above, chance shifted the fortunes of war further down the hill, leaving the combatants in the trench to decide the issue for themselves. No comrade could give aid—the winner, whether he be Raoul, or the German, must triumph by sheer brute force. The fight was shorn of military glory. Approving commanders could not have followed their chokings, scratchings, beatings, and flounderings in the soft, cold slime. Like enraged hippopotamus bumping enraged hippopotamus in a jungle black hole, they wallowed and fought, until entirely exhausted. And when at last, soaked and swathed with filthy clay, from heel to crown, all streaked and mottled with each other's blood, they found themselves back again under the gleam of the candle in the wall.

The German spoke:

"Neither of us can win at this dirty business. Hell!"

Raoul attempted to assault his hideous enemy, but could only sit up and shoot fire with his eyes.

"It's finished, Frenchman. I can't hit you either—or I would."

"Wait till I get my breath, Hun."

"A truce, then."

Raoul ground his teeth savagely. His bruised, swollen lips hissed, "Vile beast!"

At that the German strove to attack, but fell impotent on his side.

The effort amused Raoul.

"Call it a truce, Boche, and when we've rested, we'll get out of this ditch and look for swords."

"That sounds fair, Frenchman—damn you!"

"There's no honor in strangling a sausage-maker down here."

"No! you're not the breed of dog my mills use!" said the German, attempting coarse wit.

Speech was becoming common. They left off bullying for several minutes, breathing heavily like two leaky bellows.

Raoul a little later dragged himself to a bit of dry straw. The German followed in silence.

They sat facing one another, as if in grim awe of each other's ugliness. It was utterly impossible for them to fight. Their last exchanges of talk had fallen to the level of bad boys' abuse. They merely breathed on, exposed to the mellowing influences of human hearts beating tranquilly.

And the magic of feelings began to work. Even in extremity men can appreciate the ridiculous. Such warriors as Raoul and his enemy were only men hardened by war. When weariness of fighting had taken away some of the spleen, the void must fill with another energy. It was easier to be simply human.

The German smiled.

Raoul laughed in derision. A slight change came over him, and he said honestly: "You're the first man I've met that I couldn't smash."

"So!" commented the German. "I was thinking the same. I did find one chap up beyond Hirson who gave me trouble, but I beat him."

Another pause of contemplation.

"Hirson?" asked Raoul, interested.

"Yes. Our army has all that country."

The reply was a little unfortunate, and the Frenchman scowled. The German turned the conversation.

"Did you say we would finish our duel with swords?"

"Swords—if we can find two. Failing, we can use bayonets."

It was agreed. They sat for a few minutes more in silence, as if thinking bayonets.

Now soldiers dislike to fight with bayonets. They revolt at jabbing and slicing with cold steel attached to the ends of guns. It is said of a bayonet charge between Russians and Japanese, during their late war, that they dropped their guns and threw rocks at one another.

"And if you kill me," ventured the German, "after the war will you send a message to the Rhine?"

"And if you kill me," said Raoul, slowly and thoughtfully, "will you send a message for me?"

Again they agreed, but the messages waited. This

was the first chance to be simply human. The mere fact that they had condescended to serve each other in peace, thawed some of the barrier of war.

It was the Frenchman's give-and-take characteristic that prompted him to make a proposal.

"Have you a watch?" he began. Receiving an affirmative answer, he proceeded. "I propose that both of us guess at the time. If either of us get within thirty minutes of it, as indicated by your watch, we shall fight out our part of the Battle of the Rivers—unto death. If both guesses are thirty minutes, or more, wild of the mark, then you go out one end of the ditch, and I'll leave by the other; we shall meet on some other battlefield."

The German drew out a hunting case gold watch. "Guess first," he said.

Raoul did not hesitate. "Thirty-one minutes after midnight."

"Well, I say—thirty-two minutes after twelve."

The sporting blood in each impelled him to try to get within the thirty minutes—each believing it must be near one o'clock in the morning.

"My watch," said the German, before opening it, "is key set—I couldn't have tampered with it."

They laughed.

The lid of the watch flew back, and both men looked quickly to see the hands.

It was three o'clock!

They laughed heartily then, and almost forgot that they had been trying to kill each other a little while before.

"We both win," said the Frenchman—cheerfully. For, after all, it would be unpleasant to kill a stranger and report to his family on the Rhine after the war.

"May I be of service?" asked the German.

Raoul thought of Hermance in the tumbled-down château to the north, but beyond communication, in the German lines. The love-light sprang into his eyes. His pre-eminent trait of catching first the high tints of beauty claimed him, even in that dug-out. He saw the ivy-clad walls, the autumn leaves aglow in the sunlight, the stretches of landscape along the Oise—then back to the gray battlements, with Hermance standing far above, her hand shading her eyes as she looked in vain for his home-coming.

And the German was thinking of his castle on the Rhine.

"Yes; perhaps a little note—a brief letter you would pass to my wife."

"Send what you like; it will be delivered."

"She is in Ste. Genevieve, on the Oise."

"My command passed through there—now I remember, we rested there early in the war."

"Does it yet stand?" asked Raoul, eagerly.

"Quite safe. I ordered the inhabitants to remain in their houses—only by some unfortunate accidents were two river cottages and the old mill burned. Everything else is in tactful protection. My orders were so."

Raoul did not appreciate this peculiar construction. He turned his attention to the note.

The puzzle was what to write with and what to write on—the men looked at each other and laughed. After considerable rummaging about, they found a piece of brown paper under the straw. Hopeless searches were then made for a pencil.

“Do as your countryman did in the Bastille—use blood for ink,” suggested the German. “Here, this ugly vent in my wrist bleeds profusely. Dip a stick in it, and write.”

Raoul took up a splinter of wood and did as requested.

“Put in it,” said the German, good-naturedly, “this is written with a German’s blood!”

Raoul wrote the exact words.

In the end, he wiped the stick dry, then dipped it in his own blood and signed his name.

The writing was dried over the candle. During the interval of this occupation, fresh artillery storms began to rage. French and German shells passed each other with angry growls overhead.

Hurriedly Raoul folded the message and handed it to Count von Essenhendel for delivery. For such was the German’s name, but Raoul did not know it.

“*Au revoir*,” they said, and parted ways in the trench.

CHAPTER IV

A MEMORY OF SIN

WHEN Count von Essenhendel arose the morning after his night's adventure, and put on a bright, new uniform, he recalled his promise to forward the French soldier's letter.

Shortly after escaping from the trench, von Essenhendel's division swept back that way, and he was soon safe within his ranks. The Germans retired to a sheltered depression in the forest, and their leader took a few hours' sleep. He called his orderly.

"Pass this note to Reindoldt—it goes to Ste. Genevieve," said the Count.

As it was about to leave his hand, he withdrew it for a moment's glance. He looked on both sides of the folded sheet for the name and address, and failing to find the superscription, was obliged to open out the creases.

"Madame Beauvais,

"Château Morestier,"

he read in astonishment. He examined quickly the signature—"Raoul Beauvais!" it stood—written in the latter's own blood. The Count drew his hand across his clammy brow. He had been fighting for his life with the husband of Madame Beauvais! He twisted his mustache thoughtfully, and felt uncomfortable.

The discovery surprised him so much that he was quite upset. His faculties refused to function properly, and he muddled through a bad sensation—in most men, it would have been called a pang of conscience. To be fair to Count von Essenhendel, he had only stilled the conscience which his careful mother had cultivated for him. Honor was not entirely extinct within him, however, and when her name lay before his eyes in blood, a memory of sin smote him.

For Von Essenhendel, since his shameful visit to Château Morestier, had developed a violent love for Hermance Beauvais. He had begged her forgiveness on bended knee—and assured her she would never be molested by anyone. She had spurned his overtures with a disdain that only a French girl could feel under such circumstances. His pleadings that she forsake her husband and become his wife were met with ravings that drove him from her presence. But again and again he renewed his petition. Constantly she was on his mind—he sent her letters and presents, which were always returned.

And at last to be the messenger with a note from her husband stirred some well in him that he did not understand.

Nevertheless, he steadied himself with a glass of brandy, and sent the note on to Reindoldt, with instructions to see that it was promptly delivered at Château Morestier.

During the day, and at intervals for a long time

thereafter, the invader's conscience troubled him for an awakening. His experiences with the Beauvais couple caused him to reflect. He deeply regretted his conduct, and wished that he had not committed the sin. The charm of life for the young husband had been ruthlessly despoiled by him. He, Count Frederick Wilhelm von Essenhendel, the pride of his family, had covered himself with shame. The crime in all its loathsomeness stared him in the face as though it were a living, threatening monster.

The Count was heir to extensive estates on the Rhine, and had been brought up in an atmosphere of the best of German culture and refinement. A dash into frightfulness licensed by the high commanders of the Kaiser had temporarily dulled his senses, and made him one of the brutes that terrorized Europe in 1914. He was a victim, like most full-blooded young men of his voluptuous nature. Nevertheless, the wholesome foundation of his youth mainstayed him to a certain extent. He was also brave and sensible of the rights of others, and even cherished a praiseworthy determination of accomplishing something in the world that would redound to the betterment of men. Like all other young Prussians, he had been fooled into believing that the unsatiated hunger of the Fatherland for glory demanded that other nations be torn asunder and punished. He was not religious. He believed in a God, but had refused to follow the faith of his mother. There was nothing wantonly mean in his

character. Duty to Kaiser and country was big in him. The love of adventure swept him on in a whirl; hence his recklessness in fighting hand-to-hand combats in the trenches, when it was not necessary for him to expose himself. These things and more could be said in favor of Count von Esenhendel; in spite of the black mark this story records against him.

* * * * *

Even while the letter written in the trench was being transmitted by stages from headquarters north of the Aisne to Ste. Genevieve, on the Oise, Madame Beauvais and two others, Father Pelletier and old Dr. Joumonville, were concerned with the right and wrong of a certain problem.

"It must not be done, Dr. Joumonville," the kind-hearted priest was saying, as he walked the floor with his wrinkled hands clasped behind him. "It would be deliberate murder, planned and consented to by three persons—Madame Beauvais, you and me. I could never grant absolution for such a heinous crime, though I were not a party to it. There is only one right thing to do. Madame Beauvais must give birth to the child, and permit it a fair chance in this world."

"But, Father, you do not seem to comprehend all the points of my argument. Try to take a broad, unbiased view as I go over the case again, remembering always, of course, that I am a good Catholic,

and never in my forty years of medical practice have I taken innocent life, or winked at unnamable crimes against nature. This is a totally different matter. France is at war with a cruel enemy. Heathen propensities are predominant in the invading soldiers of this enemy, Germany. The world is shocked at the atrocities of Louvain. This peaceful village is swooped down upon, and a brute—not a man in feelings—commits a crime, out of which is now about to come a life. This is not a creation willed by either father or mother, by indiscreet lapse of human weakness, or through surreptitious disobedience to conventionalities of society. It is to be born as the direct result of perfidious sin. To permit it to live, would be to expose it to the scorn of the world and the ill-treatment of our people. I believe it would be an act of mercy to use some harmless method of removing that much suffering from this long and perilous journey. I will go further—in my opinion, it is our duty to release this spirit.”

The expression on the priest's face showed that he had tried to listen with an open mind. He asked simply:

“What would God have us do?”

“It is well you ask it, Father. Answer the question for us, and there will be no further hesitance.”

“‘Thou shalt not kill’ is the plain, written law. God has not left us in doubt.”

“True, Father; but does God will a life of torture

and shame for human beings? There are exceptions to rules. The written law reads: 'Thou shalt honor the Sabbath and keep it holy,' and when the Jews murmured at Christ's disciples for having plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath, he reminded them that it was the spirit of the law that should be kept, saying: 'Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day?' Ah, I believe God would sanction this putting out of misery an undesired life before it comes to know and suffer. It is as a creature in need of help—would it not be right to relieve it, and pass it on to the Creator who gave it?"

Father Pelletier only shook his head, and went quietly from painting to painting in the doctor's study, as if appealing to the winged angels in oil, the saints, the Christ himself on the Cross, for light and guidance.

"My judgment, my heart, my religion—all tell me I must in the name of Our Savior forbid this crime."

"Then the child will grow up among us," said Dr. Joumonville regretfully, "for Hermance Beauvais will never do what you forbid."

"Ah! that I well know, Doctor. I must hasten now—she comes this morning to plead her own cause."

As Father Pelletier shuffled along towards the church, leaning on his stout cane, he saw Hermance

already on her way. There was light in her face—and a renewed determination.

She carried a letter in her hand. One of the German soldiers quartered in the village had just brought it to her. It was the first news from Raoul, and it told her many things in a few sentences. Besides being a love letter, an inspiring message, it also summoned her to do her part for France.

She waved the letter to Father Pelletier, and ran to show it to him. "Written with a German's blood!" she said, shuddering slightly—"and if he can write in the blood of the enemy, how can I present him with a German child on his return from the glorious battlefield of victory? Father, it must not be!—it cannot be! Such a blow would madden my Raoul!"

The shepherd of the faithful flock made no comment, but led the young woman into his little room in the rear of St. Joseph's.

Once within, he listened patiently to all she had to say. Then in a steady voice, mellowed by long years of holy service, and charged with the responsibility of his sacred office, he laid down to her the divine law and its interpretations. Afterwards he stated plainly the wrongs involved in such an act as that proposed. But he felt how ineffectual studied argument was on Hermance, even while he proceeded. When he had concluded, she poured out the bitterness of her heart in an unnerving spell of weeping.

Then with the inborn talent of any woman wanting her way, she swept aside all consideration of what the priest had said, and restated the main point to her mind—that she wished to dispose of the child. She supported her demand with the most natural and strongest of human appeals. Never had the good Father heard a more touching plea for murder. But despite the wrenchings at his heart, he constantly shook his head in refusal.

For two hours, Hermance clung to his robe and wept and begged in turns, trying to touch every human sentiment in him. Each refusal to grant her permission—or to grant her absolution after committing the act—was a signal to make a greater effort to influence his judgment. At last she wearied the old man and caused him to weep with her.

It was then that victory seemed to be within her grasp. Her pleadings had been so earnest and violent that she lay exhausted at the Father's feet. As he wept, Hermance hushed and felt relieved. The faded red carpet on the floor seemed to be softer—the ornaments and holy emblems about the quaint room looked friendlier. Nevertheless, her swimming eyes wanted greater comfort, and she sought the face of the Statue of the Virgin. There, too, the white marble, to Hermance's imagination, glowed with the warmth of life.

But as the petitioner fastened her gaze upon the Holy Mother's features, she began to feel uneasy. The statue's eyes were glorying in that mysterious

maternal feeling that had already begun to tug persistently at Hermance's heart. And, then, quivering there on the carpeted flags, Hermance allowed her startled eyes to trail slowly down the statue's snow-white neck to its ample breasts—and to the child clasped tenderly to the bosom. She turned away and groaned.

And she heard the Father get up resolutely and say "No."

Having lost in her attempted flight from her husband's contempt, Hermance gave herself over to wailing cries that not only unbalanced her reason, but upset Father Pelletier.

"I must take my own life!—I cannot go through with this!"

The Father had heard this same declaration from women all his life.

"You forbid me? Then you send me to perdition!—Oh! my poor Raoul!"

Over and over again she pleaded and cried, until the old man was near to distraction. He could not answer her further—he began to fear that she would finally wring from him permission to destroy the child.

At the height of her advantage—for in her lapse of hardness of heart, Hermance was determined to win, and saw that her wailings were telling upon Father Pelletier,—she calmed himself quickly, and put the question in even tones, leveled directly at the Reverend Father:

"For my sake, you will absolve me after the deed is done. Tell me 'Yes'—quickly!"

"You remember the vow you took on your wedding day, Hermance?"

"Yes, Father—but please say 'Yes!' "

"I do say 'Yes,' Hermance, provided you make me one solemn promise."

"Must I reaffirm what I said in church that day?—I do now, Father, with all my heart. I recall clearly what you said then, and I will perform to the letter."

"That is well, Hermance, but the promise I would now exact of you is a little thing—only when you have heard it, promise me that you will keep it faithfully."

"Yes, Father, I'm listening."

"Promise me, Hermance, that you will nurse the babe once at your breasts before you kill him."

Hermance promised amid grateful tears, and in transports of joy clasped the aged priest's feet.

Then as she was leaving, she noticed a merry twinkle in Father Pelletier's eye, and it disturbed her.

CHAPTER V

THE SILENT ADVOCATE

INTOXICATED with the success of her visit to Father Pelletier, Hermance went home happy and contented—except when remembering the maternal look on the Virgin's face and the twinkle in the priest's eyes. But these she could not understand, and brushed them aside for future worry.

Anyway, the crushing load of long, weary months rolled off her shoulders to some extent, and she sang parts of an old song as she gathered up a few things she had made for baby and threw them into the fire! The abuse she had suffered, the horror of her condition, the fear for Raoul's happiness, had temporarily hardened her heart. If Father Pelletier had refused to absolve her from sin, she might have lost her reason altogether. But she had milled away at the rough stones of her trouble until they became sand—she could handle them now. She was free to destroy the seed of the hated German, and put the harrowing memory forever from her. In her strange ecstasy, she played with the suggestion to conceal the whole affair from Raoul!

Madame Morestier received Hermance's announcement of Father Pelletier's decision with the same moody, fixed stare, and unconcern, that had dominated her since the night of the invasion.

Hermance sometimes thought her mother's mind was blank. From morning to night, the gray-haired widow, pale and pitifully sad, remained motionless for hours at a time, or wandered aimlessly about the decaying structures that had sheltered the Morestiers for more than twelve generations. Was it possible that she brooded over the prospect of German blood coming into the family? Or did she think at all? The old lady had been maltreated by the soldiers on that fateful night—and several times since she had been near to death's door. It was probable that she would never recover, and Hermance, somewhat resigned to the condition, did not wonder at her mother's forlorn, unresponsive attitude, but went her way to bask for the time in the sunshine of promised deliverance.

The details of how and when the tragic deed would be accomplished had not yet occurred to the expectant mother. The permission to slay was the important thing for the moment—the safety-valve of her feelings, the antidote toy of imagination to be twirled and fondled until the climax of mental endurance had passed. But Hermance had not yet suspected the innocent snare of the priest's exacted promise. For the fanciful, half-maniacal joy was only a drawbridge thrown to her from across the abyss, to bring her to firmer footing, where God and Nature could have a fair hearing.

And the waiting, the nerve-wrecking suspense, already approached the end. By the going down of

the sun on the same day that Hermance pleaded with Father Pelletier, the time was fulfilled. The attendant satellites that were grouped about the Star of Bethlehem would smile that night over an unwelcomed advent. For at the coming of twilight, when conscientious Dr. Joumonville was leaning over the low churchyard wall, confessing his error of judgment in trying to persuade that destruction of innocent life is ever justifiable—and incidentally enjoying the subtle wisdom of Father Pelletier's exacted promise from Hermance,—a runner came from the Château Morestier, to request the immediate attendance of the doctor.

As Dr. Joumonville hurried away on his crutches, he winked at the man of God, who smiled in return.

* * * * *

It was a boy. Dr. Joumonville wiped his spectacles, adjusted them on his nose, and in the serenity of his professional dignity, gave some brief instructions to *Grand'mère* Dauphin. The old grandmother was almost as capable in such matters as the doctor himself, but she listened respectfully to his crisp, nasal orders. Madame Beauvais was quietly looking at the chubby, curly-headed mite, that lay cuddled in the curve of her arm—and when the babe's lusty lungs began functioning in a noisy row, maternal distress clouded the young mother's countenance. Dr. Joumonville hobbled to the door—and as if nearly forgetting, turned and said brusquely:

"In three days, Madame, I will call to carry out your wish regarding the child—if by then you have complied with your promise to Father Pelletier."

Grand'mère Dauphin searched the physician's laughing eyes over her cracked lenses.

Hermance looked at him inquiringly.

When the doctor had gone, and the room was tidied, the storm in Hermance's mind subsided. She became calm—the past was laid aside for the present. She was in perfect health—rested, wide-awake and at ease. The flower-perfumed air of spring filled the large, square room with the ozone of vigor. Birds warbled and whistled on the new-leaved boughs. From neighboring barnyards came the clucking of hens and the bleatings of May calves.

On the morning of the second day Hermance observed Madame Dauphin as she arranged the table after removing the breakfast dishes, and said:

"*Grand'mère*, I am happy. Explain to me why I should be so—why this peace that glows in my heart. Tell me what this feeling of tenderness is—this awakening of a yearning that is fast changing my point of view. I do not think as I thought, I do not see as I saw—there is a thrill somewhere here—all through me. Tell me, *Grand'mère*, what is it that creeps over me like the enthralling pleasure of music, and what is it that makes me feel more important—I mean, makes me want to enjoy this sweet responsibility. That is not exactly what I

am trying to say, and perhaps it is—tell me, *Grand'mère!*”

“The awakening of Mother’s love, my child,” replied the wrinkled-faced, time-tried, God-fearing old woman, and she caressed Hermance’s fair brow.

Thus began the pleadings of the silent advocate. Other pleaders made a show of speaking and of gestures and of tears, but the silent pleader would have none of these things. This Mother’s love did not come forth and parade before men, and try to win by the witchery of beauty and splendor; but it sprang full-grown in its birthplace, the royal tribunal in the heart, and from that throne it filled every cell and attuned every fiber of the woman. It looked out of her eyes. It became a bright and cherry spot in her life from that moment forth. Trouble could never lessen its warmth. Cruelty, neglect, insult—nothing might ever still its voice. Even after death its yearning would not cease.

Hermance understood. Her eyes wandered to the open window, and she looked far out over the budding hills, and wondered. The while she thought she was conscious of a little hand clutching at her heart, and she heard an even, measured breathing at her side. She gazed into the blue of the heavens and tried to read beyond the vale. She turned and looked into the little eyes and there read plainly all she wished to know.

At the close of the third day, when the candles were lighted to chase away the first shades of night,

Dr. Joumonville bustled abruptly into the room. He carried a basket which creaked against his crutch. In the other hand he held a barbarous-looking knife, which gleamed threateningly as he said:

"Good evening, Madame—I have come!"

"But why that fearful knife, Doctor?—and the basket?"

"Murder, my dear woman—have you forgotten?—give him to me at once."

Horror overspread Hermance's face, and she drew her baby to her with both arms.

"*Sacré!* women always change their minds!" said Dr. Joumonville, pretending disgust, as he stalked out of the room.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEAF AND DUMB SPY

ABOUT the time of the birth of the invader's son, the French Army General Staff required special information regarding the strength and position of the Germans north of the Aisne on to the Belgian boundary. Commanders of army corps who had been opposing and investing the enemy in that region, and particularly around Compiegne, Soissons, Epernay, Chalons, and Reims, were called upon to submit the names of volunteers for the dangerous rôle of spy to the Prussian camps. Out of the ten men who came forward, one would be selected. The choice fell upon Raoul Beauvais. His native wit and intimate knowledge of the country, and initiative and bravery, had already won him promotion in the ranks. These qualifications made him by far the best man for the undertaking.

Therefore, disguised as a poor deaf and dumb peasant, suffering from a peculiar hacking cough, Raoul set out in the middle of April, 1915, to wander through the enemy's lines, and over the country at the peril of his life. He left the French army in the neighborhood of Rethel, on the Aisne, and after undergoing many hardships, made his way through the German hosts, beyond the battle front to Liart, west of Mezières on the Meuse. Five

times he was arrested and examined, but turned loose as a harmless fool. Several times sentries shot at him because he did not stop. At Liart, he was arrested for the sixth time, and taken before the commanding officer of the Germans in that locality.

"What is your name?" asked the interpreter.

No reply. The guard next to him struck him a heavy blow on the shoulder, and to Raoul's surprised, inquiring look, made frantic signs for him to tell his name. They then tried several tricks to get him to show that he feigned deafness, as they believed. Guns were fired suddenly behind him. While a prearranged silence reigned, one of the officers said to another, without looking in Raoul's direction: "That peasant idiot has blood on the back of his left hand. He may be a murderer." Whereas, Raoul had not flinched at the firing of guns, he now very nearly dropped his eyes to his hand. It was just what anyone would have done. But, finally, the Germans, failing in everything they had tried, decided to put the prisoner to the final test, and the military court went through the formality of ordering him to be shot. The mock sentence was solemnly repeated to Raoul in German, French, English and Russian. Through it all he was unconcerned, and just as they commanded that he be led out and executed at once, he fumbled in his pocket for a match, and from another quarter of his ragged attire, brought out a half-burned cigarette.

"It's no use!" cried the general. "Push him out the door—he's harmless."

On and on he wandered, getting an occasional flogging, and sometimes being shut up in prison for a day or two, but his antics and quaint music on the piccolo, and his silly facial expressions which he practiced, as well as the funny cough, passed him on safely from place to place, until one morning he walked over the high stone bridge into Ste. Genevieve. A number of German soldiers idled in front of Caddo Felon's shoe shop, and these Raoul essayed to entertain with his shrill music.

A crowd soon collected. Scattered about among the soldiers were several of Raoul's former friends—the old, lame, or incapacitated for war. But they did not recognize him. And that fact convinced Raoul of the effectiveness of his disguise.

After playing all the local pieces, he danced the Champenois Wine Fête. Then he fell on the ground in a fit of his extraordinary coughing. Recovering with apparent difficulty, he proceeded to pass around his cap. Many centimes were dropped, and the soldiers contributed pfenning. Raoul thanked them, bowing very low, and smiling, made signs to his audience that he could neither speak nor hear.

Many children followed him down the street to the café, and stood about the door while he ate. He heard some of the little fellows trying to imitate his cough, and Raoul smiled, because he knew every one of them by name. There was tiny Jacqueline,

who wore a pair of sabots he had given her. Over by the well were Helene and Edouard Trellier, both of whom he had carried many times on his back.

The lunch finished, Raoul came out and played and danced for the children especially, for that was what they were waiting for all the while. In the midst of a heel-and-toe jog, a favorite dance in the Guise district, the deaf and dumb spy was astonished at seeing Hermance pass by, in working clothes, carrying a young baby. He quickly made his bow to the children and walked off abruptly to a place of vantage, so that he could look at Hermance again.

"It is a shame that poor Hermance must take her baby with her when she works—and the child so young," Roger the Joker was saying to Picard, the wine merchant.

Again Raoul came near forgetting that he was playing deaf and dumb. Gradually he turned about so that he could catch every word the men were saying. What were they talking about anyway?—Hermance's baby!

"Yes, she's right," said old Picard. "It's not safe to leave him in the château—they say Madame Morestier would kill him. And Hermance is so fond of little Paul."

"Fond of little Paul!" ran on through Raoul's mind, repeating itself so often that he tried to comprehend the strange thing that had happened. A choky feeling came into his throat. What! had

Hermance so soon after his departure been made to believe him dead—killed in battle, perhaps,—and induced to marry Paul Hilot, the one-eyed chemist? It was impossible! And yet there was the baby—Hermance's baby! "Madame Morestier would kill him." The baby must be a boy. Why, of course! "Fond of little Paul!"—certainly it was a boy. And undoubtedly, smooth-tongued Paul Hilot had told the lie, or else why was Madame Morestier so bitter? She had always detested Paul Hilot, the liar and deceiver! So ran the tirade of questions and exclamations, as Raoul hesitated, amazed, wondering what he should do. Yes, he would overtake her beyond the village and demand an explanation.

But as Raoul hurried along, three determined German soldiers barred the way and arrested him. They dragged him into a narrow alley, and hustled him forward in spite of his cough, which he affected with great zeal.

"You claim to be deaf and dumb," one of them said to him in very broken French. "Ah, *oui*, you lie! If you be deaf, how is it you play music? How could you know some new pieces? *Auch* so! *mein lieber Gott!* You are one spy!"

Raoul maintained his presence of mind and acted his part, but the point of the music was well taken, and it troubled him. It almost caused him to forget the discovery he had made regarding Hermance. And he set himself the task of working out this knot holding so fast in his rope—if he failed, the noose

would quickly form and hang him. "How very strange," he kept repeating mentally, "that I should have overlooked a point so important." Then he wondered how it had happened that other Germans had not picked him up on his playing their new tunes as he went along.

"You had better make a clean confession this time," derisively continued the talkative captor, "or put up a tale that will stand all tests. I tell you, friend, you've made the fatal error this time."

The *idée fixe* in Raoul's mind, namely, that a fool is always safe, was drawn upon for whatever it could provide. He put on his silliest look and pretended that he enjoyed being cuffed about. He became natural to a fault of his pretending—and occasionally went into spasms of queer coughing. This cough finally aroused the risibility of the soldiers, and eventually they gave way to roars of laughter.

"He is a silly ass!" said one of the soldiers who had been silent so far except for his laughing. A third one added, "Poor devil! eight German bullets out of a platoon would be an act of mercy to him."

Raoul's captors spoke exclusively in bad French, because they intended that he should hear. This much he surmised, and concluded that he had fallen into the hands of spy experts—probably they had followed him from Liart.

"Some accident in childhood," said the presiding officer—Raoul knowing that dumbness is a direct result of deafness in childhood, feared that they

would examine his tongue. "Well, ask him how long he has been a fool. He printed one word—Dinant—ask him to write more."

More Teutonic energy was expended on him than it would have required to take one hundred kilometers of trenches instead of the regulation five hundred meters, but the most he could be induced to do was to print the names of Dinant and other villages near the Belgian border.

The officer turned away in great disgust. "Fool! fool!" he said, stamping and muttering to himself.

Raoul thought it time to have another laugh, and began slowly at first, and then coughed by easy stages until he had worked up to a marvelous volume of variations. They opened the door of the old house that served as headquarters, and pushed him into the street.

For a minute he stood looking back at the laughing soldiers with the most injured expression he could command, and after shaking his head and shrugging his shoulders, walked aimlessly towards the river. He knew that they still watched him, and therefore betook himself to several houses, in full view, where he made signs of begging for something to eat.

And in the meantime he coughed consistently.

There was now only one thing uppermost in Raoul's thoughts—Hermance and her baby. He would go immediately to seek her in the fields. Why was she working in the fields? The lazy Paul

Hilot! But why was she not sewing?—her mother could always do fitting to please the women. Finally he thought it best to pretend to beg at the château, and, if unobserved, make himself known to Madame Morestier. Old Picard had as much as said that she remained at home. And wandering through the village greens, trying to imitate the casual French beggar, he drew near the old château, and made his way through the trellised entrance. He presented himself at the front door, and since no one had followed, ventured in and mounted to the apartment on the third floor.

“Ah, Madame!” he exclaimed on meeting Hermance’s mother. “I intended to surprise you.”

“Who are you?” asked Madame Morestier in a strange voice.

“Why, I am Raoul. Ssh!” he whispered, by way of caution. “I’m a spy.”

“A spy!” she repeated, frightened. The mystery appealed to her deranged mind, which he knew nothing of, and she looked cunning. “I know what you came for—you want that baby. Don’t blame you. Take him and kill him. I would if I could. I did try, but Hermance is such a fool—she caught me when I was about to drown him in the fountain at the back, and took him away. She loves the baby better than she loves me.”

“Where is she now, Madame?”

“I don’t know. Every day she takes the baby and goes away. I suppose she goes to that German.”

"What German! Tell me, is he a German?"

"Of course! I tell you Hermance has a German baby!—think of it! My God! deliver me from this world!"

Raoul felt himself growing dizzy. A grinding noise smote his ears and he heard steps. Quickly collecting his wits he forsook the wailing Madame Morestier, and hurried down the stairs, coughing.

Germans again, of course, and they took him into custody with a very determined flourish of authority. This would certainly be his very last day on earth. Madame Morestier would be questioned—she would either deny him, to protect him, not thinking to deny also that he spoke and heard, or she might unguardedly admit his identity. In either event he would be convicted of spying. Oh, well! what did it matter, after all? Hermance devoted to a German! Raoul heartily wished they would take him immediately and shoot him. What was there for him to live for—his country's sake? Yes, he had served his country well, but the light that showed him the way was his love for Hermance. Now, had she spurned him for another man? "Fond of little Paul, indeed!" and the world went round in a dark maze.

One thought saved Raoul. If he broke down and was shot as a spy, Hermance would triumph over him. His memory would be held in derision by her, even though she were a traitress, and disgrace to her country. No, he would not go back

on France! He would not give up. If they convicted him, it must be so, but in that case he would die in the service of the Republic.

His captors were the same three soldiers who had detained him a short time before. "Ha!" said the talkative one, "we shall not let you go so soon. We think we have you now, please. I think you are the same man that worked in the gas plant at Stuttgart. We shall see. You go there mit us, and mit the men who worked there. You cannot lie so cleverly, so!"

That was a new turn in events. Raoul was hardly prepared for such a change, but then, it freed him from the danger likely to follow from his having made himself known to Madame Morestier. Of course, that possibility could follow him, if she ever mentioned that he had been at the château. Anyway, he seemed destined for a trip into Germany. In their overzealousness, stupid thoroughness, they would probably increase his chances for observation. He must train his ear a little more for the German the old schoolmaster had taught him.

Very little time elapsed from his second arrest in Ste. Genevieve until he was set down at the gas factory in Stuttgart, where they were filling shells with the fearful product. They had planned ahead that Raoul would be taken to the machine he was supposed to have operated, without notifying other employees. If they recognized him as Otto Biedmann,

he was to be taken out immediately and shot. Therefore, he was ushered into the great factory. But no one recognized him.

The manager said: "Take away that coughing fool!"

What were they to do with him? Not even a German likes the idea of killing a fool. The authorities did not want him left in Stuttgart. They decided to send him to the Belgian frontier to work digging ditches. Hence, away they whirled him again, and in a few days he found himself working along with English and French prisoners of war.

But neither would they have him—his cough was too much, even for the trenches. They shunted him off to beg, or get on as best he could.

Raoul Beauvais, therefore, well-stocked with information, began to move forward cautiously. He had managed to reach the neighborhood of Avesnes, north of the Oise, but each step forward became more difficult. The odd peculiarities he had so studiously assumed, were telling on him fearfully. It was even doubtful whether he could ever shake off his cough. Besides, he was almost a nervous wreck. A few more arrests would certainly bring about complete collapse. But he must push on and on—must get back to the French lines somehow.

Having arrived in the country of his boyhood, Raoul trusted no further to his luck in daylight. He abandoned begging, and slipped through the forests and plains by night, crawling past camps

of the enemy, running great risks. On a certain midnight, he reached Guise, on the Oise.

"Is that you, René?" he asked from the roof of a shed, as a shaggy head appeared in a window of an adjoining cottage.

"Yes."

"*Bien!* I am Raoul Beauvais."

"*Mon Dieu! mon ami!* crawl close to the wall—I will help you in this way."

Once within, Raoul explained: "Now, René, you must give up that light canoe of yours to the cause of France."

"Yes."

"Go by day—early in the morning, to the cedars and pine thickets on the point out from your place below, and pretend to be clearing just on the edge all day. Cut the small trees and let them be thrown into the river to float down. Keep a stream of them on the float all day—work on into the night."

"But the Oise is almost yet in flood from the rains, and will carry them on down to the Seine. I shall get into trouble for littering the river."

"I know no law—besides it is necessary for the sake of France."

"As you like," replied old René Vincent. "What then?"

"When you go in the morning, provision the light canoe—the one that has the rudder—with enough food to last one man a number of days. Late in the evening, cut a very thick cedar, but a

short one, and tie it lengthwise over the boat, seeing that the latter is carefully covered. Weave in false branches and make it look like a well-rounded tree, a trifle more dense in growth."

"*Bien!!*"

"Then, René, I shall come to you just after dark, and lie down in the boat. You will then push it out towards the current. Put the oars inside—the rest I shall do when necessity demands."

"I understand. Then what shall I do?"

"Continue to cut cedars and pines, throwing them into the river, until someone comes and tells you to stop."

In this manner, Raoul Beauvais attempted to float beyond the German boundary, into the lines of the French.

By the second day, a great outcry came up from below. A long line of cedars and pines went trailing on, about fifty yards apart. The Germans thought they concealed mines—but from where? Men in boats were kept for half a day in mid stream examining each one as it came along. Some one was turning the whole forest into the river. Stop him! But the trees were left to go on to annoy the French. The Germans thought they saw in it a joke, and ordered the blockading cables lifted to let the cedars pass.

Likewise much curiosity was aroused in the French camps. After ten or twelve floated by, they began to fire on the cedars to see what became

of it—then, as the Germans had done, men went out in boats to examine the trees. They looked innocent enough, but the wary French said: “A joke, perhaps, but the Germans know what they are about—we shall see!”

Poor René was roughly handled. The Germans near Guise came down and caught him industriously engaged in cutting and casting out, as though he had gone crazy and imagined that he fed fodder to some monster of the waters. “Foolish mad man!” they exclaimed, and put him in prison for a week on bread and water.

The tree under which Raoul reclined, drifted on through the German outposts to within a quarter of a mile of the French. In another half hour he would have been safe, without incident, but for the frolicking of some soldiers with a dog. They were throwing a piece of dry wood into the river and urging the dog, which happened to be a savage one, to swim out and bring it back to the bank, only to be sent back after it again and again. Each time the block would be thrown farther out, and finally, it alighted in Raoul’s tree and hung. The dog came swimming after it as before. He held his head and ears just above the water line until he reached the concealed boat. On discovering Raoul, lying at full-length on his back, the dog began to bark furiously, and endeavored to climb over the edge of the canoe.

By and by, the Germans concluded something

unusual must be lodged in the tree, and a boat was put out to investigate.

It was getting dark, but Raoul could see this threatening move. He saw that they would overtake him before he could float to safety, although it could not be very far to the haven he sought. However, the long journey he had taken was now about to end in failure, or at least in great excitement. The German boat was gaining at every pull of the double set of oars, and the dog was likely to mount into the boat under the tree at any moment, causing the craft to upset or fill with water. Something must be done.

Raoul clipped the cords that bound the tree and branches to the canoe, and pushed them off into the water. The dog became frantic. Raoul was then quite out of patience with the animal, and dealt him a heavy blow with the oar. That silenced the dog, but overturned the boat!

A shout went up from the Germans in the distance, and immediately little flashes could be seen spurting out in the gathering darkness. Jets of water splashed up now and again, and Raoul, stiff from lying in one position so long, fought with the murky river in an effort to keep himself afloat. But he began to swim after a little struggling, keeping as much under water as possible—often swimming for a few seconds entirely beneath. The firing ceased, and he saw the intention was to run him down with the boat.

The erstwhile spy made for the left bank, where there appeared to be a clump of willows. But the enemy was gaining, and he began to feel his strength giving way so that now and again he was forced to tread water and rest.

Suddenly, a white pencil of a searchlight was ranged on the river's surface, and in a minute, firing began on the left bank! Raoul was soon grabbing at twigs on a ball-shaped point. An instant later, a soldier helped him to his feet! He recognized his rescuers as a part of the advanced lines of the French. The poilus opened fire on the German boat, and thus ended the pursuit.

CHAPTER VII

FOR HIS SAKE

ALTHOUGH Hermance's heart went out to her baby in the fullness of Mother love, and she had put forever from her the thought of permitting harm to come to him, yet she was deeply troubled over his presence in her humble home. What would Raoul say? Would he not want to send the child away? Undoubtedly he would want it disclosed to annoying people that for one reason or another, the baby had been placed in another's keeping. Or, perhaps, Raoul would want secrecy maintained, lest the village gossips might destroy the happiness of their future lives.

With all these considerations running through her mind, and perhaps from the inborn instinct of a mother's protecting care, inspired by God himself—Hermance from the beginning, kept her sufferings and her mother's within the walls of Château Morestier, except to Father Pelletier, Dr. Joumonville, and *Grand'mère* Dauphin. These three were pledged to absolute silence. Hermance did not know how much the village people knew of the affair, and was afraid to ask even *Grand'mère*. As a matter of fact, the neighbors knew nothing.

Nevertheless, as time went on, the village and country matrons wondered. Hermance and Raoul

were favorites with all of them, and they felt disinclined to say things aloud. Now and then one would whisper over a garden wall. In that way, the substrata of common knowledge became more or less infected with suspicions.

Hermance knew such would be the case. After deciding in those first days that she would not suffer harm to come to the child, she began to plan to keep him, notwithstanding the possibility that Raoul might have different views. She set about devising ways and means to remove all the stain from baby's horizon. If she might succeed to a degree, probably Raoul could be induced to be more tolerant—and little Paul might be allowed to take his place in the household! At least, Hermance was honest with herself in the end, and admitted that this result was exactly what she wanted—she did not wish to send the baby away!

"*Grand'mère*, tell me truly, is any talk about in the village?"

Grand'mère waited a minute before replying.

"It will not hurt me, *Grand'mère*. If it is true, tell me now. I've been cautious all along, but I cannot keep the villagers from thinking."

"*Ma chère*, I think it would have been better to have told the neighbors at the start about the crime of the German. They are your friends, and since you are innocent of wrong, they would have held you blameless."

"Yes, yes, *Grand'mère*, but I couldn't bear having

myself made the subject of such gossip, and since Paul has come I am glad I kept it to myself. If I can only lessen or destroy curiosity, it will be so much easier for the child in growing up—if Raoul consents for me to bring him up as our son.”

“Is it your wish, Hermance?” asked *Grand’mère* in surprise, although she had sometimes thought the young mother would find some way of clinging to the beautiful boy baby.

“Yes. There’s no need of my concealing the fact from you, *Grand’mère*. I know you loathe Germans, and certainly I do—my dislike is past the maximum of hate. And why should I not hate! How I have slaved in my heart and mind to cover up the terrible deed—and look at my mother! She is half demented. But, *Grand’mère*, little Paul is mine! He shall be of me and my blood. He shall be a Frenchman and love only France!”

“Then see you to any gossip, my child. Go at once and advise with Dr. Joumonville. If anyone can turn a dangerous corner, Dr. Joumonville can.”

Therefore, as soon as she could, Hermance presented herself at Dr. Joumonville’s study, and stated to him her wishes and fears. The old doctor made frequent requisitions upon his snuffbox, and waited somewhat patiently until the young woman had said all she wanted to say. In fact, he waited so long to speak after she had finished, that she was afraid he disapproved of her liberal views.

“Yes, Madame Beauvais, it is true that some

questions are being asked. Father Pelletier and myself are, naturally, exempt from divulging what we know, but I have taken the liberty of smoothing the way."

Hermance flushed.

Dr. Joumonville dipped into his snuffbox again, and appeared unwilling to discuss the subject further.

"And what have you said, Dr. Joumonville?"

With characteristic bluntness, he wheeled upon Hermance, almost frightening her by his manner, and said:

"Did you not go to Catillon and Avesnes immediately following your wedding for a visit? And you could have visited your husband at the front!—other women did."

"Yes—the visits to Catillon and Avesnes,—but I—"

"*Sacré!* how do I know you didn't? The devil! You come to me for advice, and now you want to start to argue!" There was just the hint of a merry twinkle in the tail of his small, blinking eyes.

"And you've lied for me?" Hermance began to laugh.

"Yes, I have, and I resent being catechized. You asked me at the beginning to keep your secret. Well! Do you suppose people will cease to think, simply because you make up your mind to cover up something? People must have some antidote—a sop to go on with. If you do not supply it, rumor makes the substitute."

"But, *Grand'mère*—what is she saying?"—asked Hermance.

Dr. Joumonville poked at his dog to stop the lazy animal's fierce dream-fight.

"Ask her," commanded the doctor. "I have seen her during the last few days."

Hermance seemed a little doubtful about the doctor's method of killing rumor, and sat dubiously turning up all the corners of the tale in her mind. She had spent two weeks and a little over with her friends in the upper country. How much of this trip had she recounted to the villagers?

Dr. Joumonville frowned, and sent her away with the following comments:—

"You go on about your business. Bridle the tongue of your mother. A question now and again will be asked, but who the devil can dispute the family doctor, the mother, and the *sage-femme*! *Mon enfant, vous êtes naïve!*"

Hermance went away more or less satisfied. She consoled the deception, saying: "It is for Paul's sake."

There was yet the difficulty of dealing with Madame Morestier. It leaked out that she had tried to drown the baby in an old fountain at the rear of the château—and she had actually made the attempt. The crime was only prevented by a laborer, who chanced to pass that way at a critical moment. For a time the incident gave color to some more surmises but the old doctor said that Madame was crazy,

and was likely to say and do anything. He also threatened the few who dared ask why, with punishment when Raoul should return. That had the desired effect.

Little by little, byway inuendoes ceased. The cruel pinch of war pressed harder week after week, and everyone had trials to meet without troubling with the affairs of two persons who enjoyed the friendship and high esteem of the entire community.

For baby Paul's sake, also—that he might be out of Madame Morestier's reach, as much as possible, Hermance engaged herself to labor in the nearby fields. Morning, noon and night she passed over the high bridge and along the village streets with Paul in her arms. Although she had forgotten the promise of Count Von Essenhendel, to see that soldiers did not molest her, it was a fact that none of the thousands of Germans who came and stopped in the place for months, so much as drew near the Chateau Morestier. By degrees Hermance lost all fear of them, and went about her work quite as if they were not always present in large numbers. She put off until that day of Raoul's homecoming the scene that must ensue, and lived from day to day. Good cheer and bright smiles lit up her face. During the planting season, while she walked across the harrowed plots, scattering the seeds, a song often gave testimony of her joyous feelings. The elixir of outdoor life made her grow more beautiful.

And as she toiled in the crops, or tended the

vineyards, she watched alertly a little fat baby boy that lay huddled on an old quilt in the shade of the flowering hedge. He seldom cried. As she went to him at regular intervals, she sometimes thought he was being blessed with a good disposition to assist him in making it easier for people to love him. The balmy spring air against his cheeks painted them pink. The blue sky, into which he blinked by the hour, lent a deeper hue to his eyes. And thus it was that he began to grow in stature.

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER BATTLES END

MEN and horses finally tired of war. Correspondents exhausted their variations of battle scenes and horrors left in the wakes of retreating armies. Statesmen finished with moralizing on the duties of governments. Editors had poured out more and more vituperations until a sickening nausea overcame them. Cries of enough had gone up from Germany, and when, at last, she had surrendered unconditionally, it was found that the great military power of the empire had collapsed like an empty shell. The plain people throughout Europe threatened the world with revolutions which promised to deadlock any progress towards reconstruction under the new régime. Great battles had been won—most of them in favor of the Allies, and for the sake of democracy. The saner elements in all nations united to quell uprisings, and to organize for the future of mankind. Germany stuck to her own versions, and—strange to say, even Russian authorities differed in their accounts of what happened.

Anyway, in 1918 the end came. Plenipotentiaries from the countires made and fixed the terms of peace. The United States crowned the glories she had hitherto won in coming forward to the rescue of democracy with no selfish motives in view, by

sending over President Wilson to the Peace Conference. There was, as usual, a great deal of grumbling, and even threats from some quarters of Europe, regarding the harsh settlement imposed upon the enemy. But after striking out "the" in the first paragraph, and putting in "to" in the one hundred and twenty-seventh line of the sixty-first section, the United States and the Allies felt that they had made all the concessions justly due the enemy, and the voluminous document of peace was signed. It was hailed with the ringing of bells and the firing of salutes—by the surviving dreadnoughts! The limp and jaded newspapers revived and printed tall headlines—even the London *Times* entitled one—"GLORIOUS PEACE HAS COME TO STAY." The American President visited, and congratulated, the few remaining kings and queens, and in the name of the people of the United States, pledged to them that war should be no more; that "peace on earth and good will towards men" would continue throughout the universe.

Map engravers began to etch a slight change in this and that quarter—England had the right to fly the Union Jack on such and such an island; France's permanent boundary was extended to include Alsace Lorraine, and a few square miles of parts of Africa; the Fatherland, much humbled, and feeling that she had been abused by all the world, was allowed to continue as a place of refuge set apart for the exile of the Huns.

Armies were disbanded and soldiers returned to their homes—many crippled for life. Millions had died during the four and a half years of fearful carnage. England alone lost in killed six hundred and fifty thousand of her young men. And all these lives had been given to bring about the infinitesimal alterations in maps, and, it was hoped, that greater safety for the world had been gained. As usual, the magnificent, honorable services of generals called forth plaudits, and to them, of course, monuments must be erected at psychological moments. The leaders had been brave and deserving of great credit, and not one of them would have consented before or after the war to the slaughter of multiplied hundreds of thousands of unnamed heroes, that the glory of a few men might shine above the sordid gloom of battle fields. But such is the way of the world. These men's monuments, the monuments erected on the sites of Mons, Charleroi, Liège, Namur, Ypres, the Marne, and other places, may at some future day trick the populace into believing that war is a heroic pageant of brave, superior men.

But soon the world began to move on much as before, even while the deafening roar of the last cannon still echoed from crag to crag in the Alps. Sore heads and aching hearts began to get well on the homeward journey. War had come like the explosion of a nitro-glycerine factory; peace came like the unfolding of a rose overnight. Hatred reached white heat after the battles of Liège and

Namur; friendship sprang up with the mingling of discharged soldiers, as they returned to native lands.

Of those who went to war from Ste. Genevieve, only two were alive and able to return. One was Dr. Anson Joumonville, prominent among army surgeons; the other was Raoul Beauvais, scarred in battle and honored for his bravery. These two friends resigned from the army, after peace, and prepared to enter private life.

The hardships of war had rounded them out into robust men physically and mentally. Both were yet under thirty years of age, and the bloom and fire of youth still lit up their bronzed faces. They were ambitious men of action, but had not forgotten how to smile with the throngs and be gay with their fellow men.

"Raoul," said the doctor, as he motioned for a dapper waiter, in the *Cafe de la Paix*, Paris, "of course, we shall start for Ste. Genevieve in the morning."

A shadow crossed Raoul's face, and he poured some water into a glass from a decanter that had been placed on the table while they were speaking. Dr. Jumonville did not understand the change in his companion and continued:

"You know I have not been back since we left on your wedding day. I have had very few letters from my father—that territory was occupied by the enemy so long."

Beauvais made no comment. If anything he looked disturbed and even disinterested.

"Are you not going, Raoul?" asked Dr. Joumonville, turning abruptly upon his friend.

"No."

An awkward silence followed.

"What's the matter? What's happened?" The doctor sat up very straight in his chair, as if preparing to argue the point. "You and I grew up together; we have fought together and won our places on merit alone—if two men know each other thoroughly, we certainly do. I cannot conceive of your declining to go back to your wife. Have you an explanation?"

"Anson, I prefer not to discuss the matter."

"But that will not do. You know I cannot go on this way."

"Perhaps you are entitled to know why I am not going. My wife has forsaken me for a German soldier."

The doctor sprang to his feet. "It is not true!" he exclaimed.

"It is true. I have seen her—have seen their child and have heard the villagers discuss them."

"When?"

"When I entered Ste. Genevieve as a spy."

"But, Raoul, there is some mistake. Such a thing cannot be true! It is impossible! It is inconceivable!"

"Anson, I tell you it is true. I was at the Château

Morestier and talked with the Madame. She said Hermance was fond of the child."

For a few moments neither man spoke. People were hurrying to and fro in the carpeted café, waiters taking orders and disputing with guests. Idly Dr. Jumonville ground his teeth together savagely, saying as if addressing himself:

"How could a French woman, of Hermance's ancestry, do such a thing!"

"I am only telling what I saw and was told. There is no chance for me to have made a mistake—my own eyes, my own ears."

"What are you going to do, Raoul?"

The soldier was staring out across the street and waited long before he replied:

"Well, you know the French government made me a present yesterday of a few thousand francs in recognition of my services. I am going to Canada and the United States for a few years—probably I shall then return to Paris. In fact I have engaged with a house here for an agency in America. I cannot go again to Ste. Genevieve. No! No! It may be in five—ten years I can make up my mind to go. Doctor, in that last assault all of the remaining boys were killed. You and I alone remain to return to our village as representatives of the band of strong men who went out to fight for the betterment of the world. But if I return to Paris and never go to Ste. Genevieve, you will, of course, visit me—to save me pain."

"When do you go?"

"To-morrow. I hope it can be arranged so soon. My friend, Henri Galarre of *La Maison Galarre*, thinks it can be by ten o'clock to-morrow.

"And this is why you have been so silent during the few times I've seen you since we have been in the army?"

Raoul merely bowed his head. He knew this conversation was sure to come sooner or later, but it had, nevertheless, taken away his appetite and he refused to order. He sat stopped over, smoking violently, while his friend ate a light lunch.

"*Mais, mon ami, je sais que cela est vrai!*" said Beauvais firmly. "C'est fini!"

The following morning the friends parted;—Dr. Joumonville to go to Ste. Genevieve; Raoul Beauvais to go to Cherbourg to take ship for New York.

Also, after the battles had ended, Count von Essenhendel went on his way to pass through Ste. Genevieve. His repentance had been sincere, and he wished to make inquiries concerning Madame Beauvais and her husband. Without much difficulty, he obtained all the information he desired from a talkative servant at the café and inn. "Madame Beauvais has a baby—some say one thing and some say another;" and in reply to a question, "No, Monsieur Beauvais has not been back since the wedding day—he went from the church to the station." And so on, until the Count was in possession of every detail—more than sufficient to con-

vince him that his sin had cast the shadow of an unwelcome life into the home of the young French couple. Raoul Beauvais was still away, and no one knew in Ste. Genevieve whether or not he had survived the battles and hardships of war. What would he say when he returned and found the little undesirable in his home—the first born?

With a heavy heart, the brave German commander hastened out of the village and then on to his castle on the Rhine. He pondered in his mind how he would repair the damage he had wrought. When about half way home, he turned about to go back to Ste. Genevieve, to confess his wrong to the injured husband, and beg for the child. He felt sure that Beauvais would not want him, and his own flesh and blood would probably be consigned to a life of reproach in France. Then he thought of his proud family, dating from A. D. 1200,—of his mother and sisters, and more particularly of his *fiancée*! No; that would never do! He must find some way of making recompense—of aiding the Beauvais couple, for they were very poor. Raoul Beauvais won his lifelong respect that night in the trenches, during the Battle of the Rivers, and for Madame Beauvais he had great regard—the shame that he had dared to trample under foot so rare a flower of womanhood! Yes; he would aid them without their knowing the source. And he faced homeward again, relieved somewhat in conscience, since making the resolve to help. At once, he set

his practical Teutonic mind to work on some plan that would be feasible and acceptable to the independent spirit of the Frenchman—for any help offered must be indirect and appear to have been earned, and not received as a gift.

Dr. Anson Joumonville preferred to surprise his father by returning home unannounced. Accordingly, he arrived in Ste. Genevieve in the afternoon of the same day he had left his friend Beauvais, and walked rapidly along the familiar streets to his house. Many did not notice him pass. At last the children recognized him, and the news spread from house to house, "Dr. Anson Joumonville has come home!" They did not permit him to go all the way to his father alone. Old and young congregated in the square and lined the sidewalks, shouting welcome and asking questions. Every woman was as proud of him as she would have been of her own son—happy tears were shed over him; and, alas! his answers with reference to how François died—and Jean—and René—and Louis! brought forth many a despairing scream from mother and wife.

Only he and Raoul Beauvais survived, he told them briefly—and where was Raoul? Hermance herself asked the question, elbowing through the crowd and standing squarely before the young doctor now grown massive and strong. The child Paul held back in her arms, clinging to her shoulder for protection, but looking at the stranger out of his bright, frank eyes. Hermance's pleading inquiry

must be met—he perceived that Raoul was mistaken. The child was there, but there must be an explanation. Hermance could never be guilty and come inquiring about her husband thus.

“Your husband, Madame Beauvais—” Dr. Joumonville addressed her so, and searched her face to see if it changed, “was with me to-day. He lives. I left him in Paris. He will come a little later.”

Cheers and shouts awoke the echoes of the hills, and the procession moved on to the old doctor's door. He had heard the rejoicings of the villagers, and came swinging himself on his crutches, ever and anon pausing to shade his eyes with his hand to see what veteran had come home. He knew the familiar scene, for had he not gone through with it in 1870? The soldiers were coming home—would that it were his son Anson! Ah! was the broad-shouldered man who moved easily in the midst of the crowd Raoul Beauvais? He came out of the gate as they stopped in front of his door, and before the old fellow could realize what was going on, Anson lifted him clear off the cobble stones, saying: “Father, I am home. I've come to relieve you of ministering to the ills of Ste. Genevieve!” Holding the old soldier of the first Prussian war well up with his right arm, as he would have held a small boy, Dr. Anson Joumonville gripped the crutches with his left, waved them to the happy villagers and went within to be alone with the man he revered above all others.

"Then Raoul's belief is all wrong, Father?"

"It is. You are now the fourth, besides Hermance, to know the truth."

The above was the closing of old Dr. Joumonville's explanation, fifteen minutes after his son entered the study.

Anson seized his hat and dashed out of the house, leaving his father to wonder what urgent errand had called for such haste. The people without saw the returned hero running to the telegraph office, and waited in the street to learn the cause.

Two telegrams were sent—one to M. Heri Galarre, Paris, urging him to stop Raoul Beauvais from sailing; the other to Raoul, care of the steamship company, reading:

"Do not leave France. I am coming to Cherbourg to-night. There is a great mistake. Hermance is still here, and as true as any woman in the Republic.

"Anson Joumonville."

CHAPTER IX

RESTORING HIS DREAMLAND

BEFORE the great war burst upon the world, to drag its hideousness into the light of what had been considered an advanced civilization, Raoul Beauvais had dreamed of his future life with Hermance as an existence in a fairy Garden of Eden, wherein would be no forbidden fruits—no sin, no sorrow;—the dream of every other couple since the creation. His bringing up had been simple; his education wholesome; his joys genuine with his friends in Ste. Genevieve. And after that, during the great war, when he came into contact with men from every corner of the earth, his vision had broadened and he believed himself able to appreciate the meanings of things that count in the hurry-scurry of the struggle for existence. And but for the blight he had discovered while on his trip as a spy, the homecoming after battles ended, might have been the climax of happiness. Hermance would then have been the queen in his Dreamland, and he the light-hearted strong lover.

But all had been changed when he saw Hermance on her way to the fields carrying the child that had somehow come between him and all that was worth while in his future. When Dr. Joumonville left him in Paris, the blackness of his disappointment

gathered more closely about him than ever, and he set his face towards America, hoping that there he might find a respite from the pain that caused him so much suffering. In anguish he said again and again to himself, "An enemy has done this! A thief has sown tares in my field of happiness and robbed me of my treasure. While I was away fighting for the honor of home and country, unfaithfulness destroyed all that enriched my heart."

Thus murmuring to himself against the ruthlessness of fate, Raoul made preparations to leave the country for which he had fought. It was strange that in his haste to get away from the shores of Cherbourg, he never realized for an instant Hermance had also been fighting and suffering for France. Man-like, he could only think of his own disappointments, and the massive frame of young strength that God had given him, slouched under the weight of sorrow. Immediately after laying aside the duties of military life that stirred and buoyed him to action, the fires of enthusiasm cooled into lifeless ashes, and with a few old bags and a battered trunk, he moved away aimlessly in an endeavor to run away from trouble.

Meanwhile, Dr. Anson Joumonville was hurrying to him from Ste. Genevieve, bearing a message of truth and giving him an opportunity to prove his character.

And back at the railway station in Ste. Genevieve on the following day, the remnant of a once joyous

populace had gathered to wait with banners and music. Word had been passed along that Raoul Beauvais would arrive in half an hour.

Raoul's achievements while in the service of his country, had been given more than a faithful description to his friends in the village. With a purpose in mind, Dr. Anson Joumonville had praised his comrade in arms that the latter's home-coming might be a bright spot in his memory. These accounts—Raoul's reward for bravery in the trenches, his trip as a spy, and his leading the charge that had won him distinction and decorations—were given in a speech delivered in the quaint public square. Anson's father had done this, and carried out the arrangements agreed upon with his son. In fact, while Anson was hurrying to Paris, the old doctor stamped about the crooked streets talking to everybody and organizing for the welcome to the master of Château Morestier. This emphasis on the accomplishments of one of their fellow citizens, caused the people to have an opinion of themselves, and they forthwith prepared to do something beyond the ordinary for Ste. Genevieve in their demonstrations over the man who had fought through the war and brought honor upon the wayside village in Picardy. Hence, they were assembled, clad in their best attire, with never a thought of the sufferings they had endured throughout the years of deprivation. The one thought was uppermost—Raoul Beauvais would soon be home

with his family—the fair Hermance, and his little son! Nothing less than the best ovation which they could extend would suffice for such an occasion. And so it was that a short while before the train came, the village populace and the peasants for miles around, waited for his coming.

The war had ended in November. Already the murky skies of Picardy and Champagne were hovering low over the trampled and torn hills that overlooked the Oise. Soissons and neighboring towns had scarcely ceased to shudder at the explosion of shells; the bruised and mangled forests seemed doubtful that the onslaught of destructive steel had passed forever, and the brown valleys and quiet brooks were toneless in the gray of approaching winter. Nevertheless, the happy spirits of the handful of French people had revived quickly. Excitement was in the air. The cluster of eager folk about the station splashed the dejected landscape with bright colors. Genuine gaiety relieved the heavy sense of past depression. That day should be one memorable in the history of the village that had played its part in holding back the onrush of the Huns in the mad attempt to destroy the Republic.

Hermance was seated on a float draped with the tricolors. The heavy vehicle had been requisitioned from the street department, and after undergoing certain alterations, three pairs of humble dray horses had been pressed into service to drag it through

the narrow lanes of Ste. Genevieve. The young woman was as fresh and beautiful as on that day in July, 1914, when she mounted to the top of the Château Morestier and beheld the battalions of France moving swiftly to the attack. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were bright with expectation. As the great horses jogged along she looked about at her humble friends and even protested against being elevated in their midst. All the show and ceremony was not of her choosing—old Dr. Joumonville had dictated the details of what he chose to call “Raoul’s Triumphant Entry.” Father Peltier also said it would be a good thing. He insisted that the children of the village should have an example of how France bestows honors upon one of her humble heroes. The good priest joined in the holiday of rejoicing and even consented to deliver the address of welcome.

Dr. Anson Joumonville should have been an equal recipient of these local honors, but quickly he had arrived at a decision with his father that he would step aside that Raoul alone might be recognized. This, in their opinion, would enable them to accomplish more with Raoul by overwhelming him with the acclamations of his fellow men. Indeed in the brief time that elapsed, the cabal of those who knew the story of Hermance, seized upon the choice of a public event to eradicate from the minds of a few suspicious persons the last doubt regarding little Paul. And it was because this had

been made clear to Hermance that she continued riding on the float when she much preferred to have gone to the station as any other French woman might have done.

The old doctor was almost cunning in his manoeuvres to assist in clearing the right of way for the young couple. Enroute through the same street, that wound languidly past St. Joseph's, where on the morning when France's mobilized troops were rushing through Ste. Genevieve to meet the Germans, Hermance and Raoul had made their vows, this frail man, who next to Father Pelletier delighted in leading the simple people, continued to encourage Hermance to expect the reconciliation with her husband. The aged doctor was trembling with excitement and flourished his crutches unnecessarily, as ever and anon he insisted that the trick they were playing on Raoul was as much for the young man's good as for Hermance's sake, and above all, he repeated their efforts would not fail. He told the young wife how Anson would prepare Raoul for the meeting while they were yet underway on the train. Hence she continued to sit on the float, anxious, under strain of possibilities which might overwhelm her. Despite the quietings of the old, crippled doctor she could not avoid thinking—constructing the scene as it might take place. Her mind flitted away to meet the oncoming train, and tried to visualize to herself the man she loved and the effect

his real feelings were producing upon his countenance. Would he ever be the same Raoul? Would he break her heart by receiving her coldly?—or would he come smiling as in the days when they roamed over the heights along the Oise and listened in the evening to the song of soaring larks? Would he refuse to acknowledge the little boy who sat on the stoop at her feet innocently elated with the gaiety of the peasants on the way? Would Raoul come again as he had gone, whispering bits of love sweets and pouring out floods of joyous exuberance that seemed so natural to him in the former days?—or would his brow be blackened with frowns of hate which even his memory of love for her could not soften?

Somehow she dared to believe that the man who had lived among the humble people of Ste. Genevieve, and had vowed his devotions to her, would come again in the blithesomeness of his young manhood to receive her as his lawful wife. This man had gone forth to battle that France might survive the brutality of autocratic Germany, and something told her she might expect of him recognition that she had done her duty and suffered with others, while the change in the world was taking place. He had triumphed over the invader—she had been crushed by the same enemy;—he had won fame in victory; would she win only scorn? Her sense of justice told her she had no right to doubt; but intuition told her it was diffi-

cult for a man to understand a woman's point of view. She was proud that he had been rewarded by the Republic for his bravery; would he be proud of her for having suffered in silence and performed her duties as she saw them?

Then she reasoned with herself, and examined her sufferings as part of the requisitions for the good of her country. Had she not risen bravely from her defeat steadfast to the end! She had triumphed and held her ground as certainly as had any soldier or general in the Allied ranks. Yet so precarious was the situation that a smile from Raoul would make the world anew for her; a frown would crush her more than had the horrors of the invasion.

On the homeward-bound train, Dr. Anson Jounonville began cautiously to prepare Raoul for the information which he must impart before their arrival. He had begun with his dissipated companion by declaring that Hermance was faithful and deserving of the full measure of his love which had been pledged at the beginning of the war. He reserved the privilege of telling Raoul more after they had been awhile on the way. Raoul came with him reluctantly, although the doctor could detect the springing up of hope in the man's face. After the train had wormed its way out of Paris, and began threading through the fields along the countryside, the young doctor found Raoul becoming restless and impatient. He said:

"Raoul, you gained recognition for the part you played in the war;—you refused to accept commissions, but they gave you a number of decorations for bravery, and you are going to be met at the station by your neighbors who will proclaim you a hero. You are reaping your reward."

The man scarcely trusting himself to hope that the disappointment which had brought sorrow to him might be explained, showed that he cared not for honors at such a time, and turned impatiently to look out over the Seine.

Anson continued, "You are reaping your reward! You are going now to meet Hermance, who will be at the station with others to receive you and to show that you hold a place in their hearts of which you should be proud."

Raoul made no sign that he heard, and never took his eyes from the passing landscape.

Dr. Joumonville remained silent for several minutes and then said slowly: "I cannot conceive how it would be possible for a son of Ste. Genevieve, who had merited the approval of his officers during this war, to fail to recognize the part played by the women at home."

"What do you mean?"

"Raoul Beauvais, I mean that you are not a gentleman, much less a Frenchman, if you refuse to give Hermance credit for her patient services to France, and to hold her blameless for things

she could not avoid! I know you will be the man that I have always believed you to be."

"Who has said that I will not do my duty?" Raoul blurted defiantly.

"Nobody."

"Then what is all this about? Tell me now. You hurried me off with you from Paris, merely giving me your word that I was mistaken about Hermance. But I am entitled to know the facts, and insist that you tell me or I will get off the train at the next station."

Dr. Joumonville sat quietly observing the man he had aroused, and waited before speaking. Raoul flushed and stirred uneasily in his seat by the window, and made a show of the fine spirit that had carried him forward above other soldiers in his regiment.

And then Anson told him the truth.

The last of the story was hastened because the train had already approached the outskirts of Ste. Genevieve. Raoul sat with bowed head, as one in a trance, but seemed really trying to comprehend. Anson brushed the soldier's bright, fresh uniform and made sure that his sword hung just right, when the train whistled for the station.

When the furor of cheering had subsided, Beauvais stood up on the float, near Hermance, and hesitated as if uncertain what to do. Father Pelletier, in the name of the people, was ready to welcome him back to Ste. Genevieve. But above the

exigencies of such an occasion the reverend Father held uppermost his duty as the pastor of souls, and stood eyeing the handsome hero as if commanding him by silent prayer to act the part of a brave man.

Raoul met his wife as he would have done a week after the beginning of the war. Then the sea of faces waited for the response. Hermance leaped out of the terrible prison that had held her crushed for so many years and fulfilled every expectation of the little party who had engineered this reunion. He had kissed her many times and said things aloud just as though no one were present. Then he lifted on high the child and kissed him! At last Hermance's sustained battle was won!

Then Father Pelletier came forward and began the address of welcome in the name of his faithful parishoners. The people listened with difficulty, because the more human thing had happened and the words of the aged priest were superfluous. But, eventually, the fire of French enthusiasm swept the audience, and they entered into the spirit of the welcome being extended. Raoul responded, and in concluding he became the splendid man of the hour, touching the simple imagination of the old people who had known him from childhood, until he felt himself one of them, desiring to share their pleasures and shoulder his part of their responsibilities. He was caught up in the whirl of

his own feelings, and reached for little Paul again, and holding him up before them said:

"Look! I show you a Frenchman, my son!— who will grow up to fight for France in the future. May he too bring renown to this quaint village, and may he do more for France than I have done!"

Then shouts of rejoicing echoed across the valley, and the procession moved forward from the station to the old church, the spire of which had escaped the shells of the invaders, and there they gave thanks that even two of the many who had gone forth to battle had been spared them.

And later, Raoul went with Hermance to the Chateau Morestier, to take up again private life under the new régime.

In the days that followed, Raoul and Hermance strolled along over the heights and through the forests, as in times gone by, and builded again the vision of their youth. They told and retold incidents and experiences of the war just closed, and over the one deep wound drew a covering of love and charity. Paul was a child of the war and must be brought up a Frenchman, and, if need be, trained to turn his energies and talents against the foe.

Then husband, wife, and child went to Paris for a fortnight, to spend their holidays; for Christmas was coming on, and, since it was Hermance's first trip to the great city, her husband wished that she might behold the Capital arousing itself to take on

again the gaiety that had made it famous throughout the world. Her lightness of heart broke all bounds and she once more dreamed of things she had hoped for while yet struggling with the maintenance of the old château. She met the men of the army and their families. She visited places of interest in the city, and drove with Raoul through the gilded boulevards and the parks, that are always popular even in winter.

On the homeward journey, while the train glided swiftly over the plains, and through the glorious field of the Battle of the Rivers, she sat with her hand in Raoul's and said for perhaps the twentieth time: "And to think this day has come to us!"

CHAPTER X

PRACTICAL REPENTANCE

AFTER returning to his castle on the Rhine, Count Von Essenhandel continued to think of Madame Beauvais—he hoped that some day he might be able to make material recompense for his wrong. He also hoped, as might be expected of the Teutonic mind, that Raoul Beauvais had been killed, and that he some day might be able to marry Hermance. The Count's repentance and reflections were in fact so mixed and contrary to the tenets of civilization as known among the Allies, that it was difficult at times for him to analyze his own feelings. He had resolved to make reparation, for there was something that caused him uneasiness and wrought hard upon his guilty conscience. He could never be entirely free from the torture the memory of Hermance's face imposed upon him, and in some inexplicable way the friendship tie he had made with the French soldier, that night in the trenches, was of the extraordinary type that is burned into the heart by the close meeting of two spirits in the combat of death.

All these things worried the Count day and night. Sometimes he was quite out of sorts with himself, saying in his impatience: "A strong man may be sorry, but this is damnation!" Neverthe-

less, he decided to act while under the spell, and, naturally, a German would be practical in evolving a scheme to appease even the clamors occurring within his own peculiar being.

Accordingly, Count Von Eisenhendel sent to Paris an invitation for Jacob Lederfrank, a German Hebrew long resident in France, to come to the Rhine for a conference. For several generations, the Von Eisenhendels had dealt with the Lederfranks, in Paris. The young Count had many times depended upon the elder Lederfrank for loans, when his own Teutonic parents refused to supply him with funds. And when casting about for ways and means of carrying into execution a laudable resolution, the Count remembered his Jewish friend's son.

"Of course," said the Count, on beginning the interview, "I shall not mention the matter to you at all, unless you can vow absolute fidelity, and agree under seal to remain with me in whatever capacity or business we choose, so long as I may require you."

The Lederfranks had become impoverished during the war. Some of the older Frenchmen remembered their German extraction, and throughout the conflict they were under suspicion. This had been carried to such an extent that the family suffered many financial losses; therefore, Jacob's answer was prompt, and in agreement with the wishes of the wealthy German.

"I am prepared to enter into such a contract—even for life, if necessary. It's not a question of what I do, for I must do something, and if results are obtained, then I please myself and please you. Whatever you tell me of this secret to which you have referred, will be kept. Your name, your connection with anything I do, will be completely covered. You can trust a son of Moses for that! They may be shrewd, and labor under a handicap of eternal prejudices, but fidelity in business has always been one of the race's redeeming virtues. You may now, my dear Count, unfold to me exactly what you wish me to do, and immediately we shall enter into the writings."

The Count admired the smooth, clean-cut Jew, who could easily pass as a polished French gentleman. He knew that Jacob was honest; he also knew that he would be faithful. The Lederfranks were all well endowed with business ability—as is every Jew,—and that he would be just the man to send to Ste. Genevieve to work out some commercial scheme with Raoul Beauvais, if he had returned. Therefore, the opulent German told all the story, and outlined the future policy he wished carried out to a successful issue.

"I have written to Paris for information regarding Beauvais," said the Count, after a moment's silence. "A reply should be here any day."

"You take risks, my dear Count!"

"Ah! trust me for my own cunning! You forget, Jacob, that the Germans have proven themselves master spies."

"Quite so—to their injury."

"We shall not discuss that now."

"I beg pardon. I meant no offense."

The Count lit a fresh cigar and rudely strode back and forth across the floor. Lederfrank had not mentioned knowing something also about Beauvais. Consequently, when he admitted an acquaintance with the popular soldier—who was too proud to accept a commission from the French Government during the war—the pompous German whirled in his tracks and eyed the visitor. His Teutonic mind resented criticism.

"Yes, I know this man, Beauvais. Clever! There have come to me details of the career of this soldier and of the promotion justly due him. I assure you, Count, he's no ordinary man!"

"To that I agree. I tried to kill him in the Battle of the Rivers, and he tried to kill me. We were evenly matched! Ah, but my dear Jacob, we shall see German superiority! I am determined if that man lives to outwit him in business—for the sake of my son."

Lederfrank, as if ignoring the Count's interruption, proceeded:

"You recall what the Paris papers said of him just after the retreat from the Marne, and I might add now, Count, Beauvais still lives. He is at

this moment in Ste. Genevieve with Madame Beauvais, at the old Chateau."

"The devil! I meant to have married that woman myself."

"Again, my dear Count, the Frenchman holds his own with you."

Then continuing—"the brief interval that has elapsed will not have freed his mind entirely from his recollection of you, and, I can assure you, unless you handle your plans with the greatest care, Raoul Beauvais will find you out and add another dead German to the long list that has gone before."

Completely ignoring Lederfrank's comments, the Count whirled upon him, his face reddening. "What has he done with the child?"

"He has acknowledged it as his own, and the boy is being brought up as a Frenchman."

"*Ach, so!* he will pay. I will make him yet know a German!"

Lederfrank still did not seem to heed the Count, and went on to say: "Beauvais has no money, except the ten thousand francs given him by the Government. I believe he will be looking about for something to occupy his time and talents."

"So!"

"And he has the tumbled down Chateau, which his wife will insist he retain since it is a relic of the Morestier family."

The Count's eyes were narrowing, and with a

suddenness that almost caused Lederfrank to jump, he asked: "How do you know so much about Beauvais and his affairs?"

Lederfrank's answer was even-toned. "I have been in Ste. Genevieve for the past year working on a prospect."

"So! and what may that be?"

"Since before the war I have had an idea that phosphate could be found in that vicinity in paying quantities."

"Bosh! you waste your money! There is nothing good in Northern France—no minerals except coal and iron."

"There's a lot of steel scattered about now!"

"Yes, pieces of shells."

"Be that as it may, Count, I've spent sufficient time in Ste. Genevieve and up and down the Oise, to know much of Beauvais, who, I tell you, is the most popular citizen in the division of which Soissons is the principal city."

"Oh, well, I think something can be invented that will interest this Beauvais. And you and I, Lederfrank, will soon find out his qualifications as a business man. I will back you and him in any enterprise you may select. Of course he must be given to understand that he's only dealing with you—and your money."

The natural Jewish instinct awoke and held at attention. "And in what amount would you be prepared to invest?"

"That depends upon the business. Two hundred thousand marks—more if necessary."

"And control?" asked the shrewd, young Hebrew.

"*Ach, mein lieber Gott!* Need you ask that, and you a Jew? Why, damme! you must always retain that. You must also dictate the business policy, and guide everything. Don't be crude about it—"

"Like the Germans!"

"Why need you insult me, Jacob?"

"Beg your pardon. Proceed."

The Count frowned, but continued: "You must also be clever not to offend this Beauvais. Understand, Jacob Lederfrank, I'll spend my entire fortune, or triumph over that Frenchman! And isn't it subtle, Jacob? I take my revenge—because he was not killed—at the same time I give my son the advantages of having a wealthy father. Bah!"

Lederfrank looked uncomfortable.

"Another thing, Jake, *you must have the exclusive right to engage all employees.* See to this now. Your success will depend—my ultimate aim may depend upon your having the right to retain or discharge an employee. Get the German mind immediately for details and overlook nothing. Be thorough, my man—thorough."

"Exactly. You have in mind a place for the son, who, in a few years may be eligible for a position."

"Ach! you are understanding me at last! Why

all this trouble if I had not my son—his foster son in mind. If German blood counts for anything, it shines best in commercial affairs. Why, Jacob! Germans and Jews in business are twin brothers. Mark my words, now, that boy in Ste. Genevieve—Hermance's boy—my son—will be smarter than any lad who has ever been brought up in the French hamlet! Of course, I want to make a place for him in that business which you are to found. But you haven't decided upon what you will do."

"Oh! a factory of some kind. It best suits a German to have an interest in a factory. Ah! Count, remember the great factories of Germany prior to 1914!"

"Well, you needn't remind me of our losses."

"I beg your pardon again. It seems I must always offend you to-day."

But the Count was thinking of his own importance and of the obsession of planning and working something cunning, so he said, coldly, as if continuing, "It's the old policy of subsidizing an industry with German money. Ha! ha! ha! Don't you remember, Jacob, what we had done?—even in the United States we owned newspapers and munition factories two years after the United States had been at war with Germany. Yes, subsidizing an industry with German money is the thing! That policy will put Germany back in commercial matters where she was in 1914."

Lederfrank nodded.

"When shall I begin?"

"To-morrow, Jacob. Go back to Ste. Genevieve."

Jacob then ventured another bit of information. "I understand he has been considering something from *La Maison Galarre*. That institution in Paris was crippled during the war, and because of the fact, Beauvais could be persuaded to leave it alone."

"Then persuade him—without delay."

"But what if I decide to develop this phosphate business?"

"Didn't I tell you to use your judgment! I don't care what it is. I can depend on the business judgment of a Jew. Damn you! if you do me it will be the first time a Jew has ever got the best of an Essenhendel. Your father was my good friend when I was a youngster, and I dare you to make a mistake."

Lederfrank shrugged his shoulders, as was becoming to a French Jew, and waited for the Count to light another cigar.

"Well, I am ready, and will use my judgment. If I undertake your scheme, Count, you must give me a free hand."

"You have it, sir. What do you need to start?"

"I shall require half the money—one hundred thousand marks. The village bank of Ste. Genevieve will be pleased to receive the deposit, and

it will give me prestige to accomplish any aim I may select."

"Good!" agreed the German nobleman, with more enthusiasm than at any time during their talk.

Hence the details were settled, and Jacob Lederfrank set out for the village on the Oise, his Jewish brains in a whirlwind of scheming, with the full knowledge that in his bill-book he carried sufficient money to back up anything he wished to undertake.

By that time Raoul Beauvais was actually thinking of beginning some small business in his home town. During the first months of his stay since returning from the army, and his trip to Paris with Madame Beauvais, he had discussed with her ways and means of providing a competency. He had settled down to private life, plain and unspoiled by his soldier's experiences—even unmindful of being lionized by his military friends—he mingled with the people, and insisted they forget, in daily intercourse, that he had been an important private in the French army. He preferred being known simply as Raoul Beauvais. Nothing pleased him better than to be able to take back his niche in the usual humdrum of the village. The offer from *La Maison Galarre* had been given up for the reasons stated to the Count by Lederfrank—Beauvais discovered the institution's financial weakness. The master of Château Morestier

would rather be independent in a small way, and live at home with friends of his boyhood.

The acquaintanceship begun a half year before between Lederfrank and Beauvais had possibilities of development. Lederfrank, upon returning to Ste. Genevieve from his visit to Count Von Essenhendel, proceeded immediately to cultivate Raoul. The Jewish gush and weakness for overdoing things came near arousing suspicions of ulterior motives, until Dr. Anson Joumonville, who had known Lederfrank in Paris, reassured Beauvais by dismissing the instance with the simple remark: "You know, Raoul, it's the way of the Jews. If a Jew likes you, he likes you entirely—and expects some day to make money out of you. Don't blame him for that—rather, I advise, take advantage of it. You want to get into business—you must get into business—why not with a Jew? I say, Beauvais, it's a dependable rule; if you haven't money yourself, get close to money."

Soon the bank manager in Ste. Genevieve could not avoid mentioning the fact that Lederfrank's account was most satisfactory. Few, if any, French firms in Champagne, could maintain balances in excess of one hundred thousand francs. "But you know Lederfrank's a Jew," the bank manager was saying on that occasion—and of course among his auditors was Raoul Beauvais—"this race cannot be equaled in money matters. In Paris, the other day, I heard a prominent banker, a Jew, make the re-

mark, 'I've often wondered where the Gentiles get all the money that we Jews take away from them.' "

Consequently, news of Lederfrank's cash got noised about in Ste. Genevieve. Men with money were what the backward village needed, and it behooved the authorities—so the mayor and his council said—to extend a welcome to all enterprising men.

The rapidity with which Beauvais made friends with Lederfrank was not surprising. In fact, they finally got close enough to each other to discuss the advisability of looking about for some business that promised possibilities. It pleased Beauvais that Lederfrank counselled taking no one else into confidence, and from day to day they walked along the river, or sat in the café, freely making suggestions one to the other.

Lederfrank persisted in talking phosphate—but at first Beauvais's tastes did not run to mines. However, he listened politely, and tried not to make difficulties in the selection of an enterprise. He was aware that the business world had begun to awake to opportunities—and secretly he believed himself willing to trust to the natural acumen of the Hebrew. However, the provincial French ambition is more easily satisfied than it is in Paris, and especially in a poor village like Ste. Genevieve, which had been content to sleep for hundreds of years. There was an inadequacy of conception of

large commercial undertakings. In fact, ambition stopped at a comfortable living. The population in the surrounding neighborhood had steadily decreased for more than a hundred years. Labor was scarce. Manufacturing projects of various kinds had thrived only to the point of supplying local needs.

But Lederfrank, realizing these conditions, kept on suggesting the phosphate, which he had been investigating and analyzing for some time past.

In the university, Lederfrank had completed courses in chemistry, mineralogy, and also a course in mining engineering. The slight traces here and there of whitish stone, in the vicinity of the Oise, had attracted his attention during the retreat of the Germans in October, 1918. He had taken pieces of the chalky formations to Paris and found that they contained ingredients valuable in the manufacture of commercial fertilizer.

One day, while he and Beauvais were still in earnest pursuit of a venture that might bring them fortunes, they returned home along the heights above the Oise, and descended a ravine on an old farm. This homestead had suffered greatly during the terrible bombardments exchanged between the French and Germans, and on account of its torn up surface, and want of fertility, reconstruction companies had neglected to fill the shell holes. The farmer and his family had gone away with refugees and never returned. The house and outbuild-

ings were demolished, and but for the water basin in the paddock, the site of human habitation had been entirely obliterated. Weeds and briars—nature's first efforts at covering up the destructiveness of man—had turned the place into a wilderness. Down in the gulch, where Beauvais and Lederfrank threaded their way, the undergrowth was thick and troublesome. But Raoul's heavy boot loosened a lump of white substance, and Lederfrank, walking closely upon his friend's heels, saw the fragment and picked it up, and began to crumble off bits which were held up to the light.

"What have you found?" asked Beauvais, turning, after he began to miss the sound of Lederfrank's footsteps.

"Phosphate again, Beauvais. I have seen several pieces of this stuff here before."

"That's the stuff, is it? What is it you call it—phosphate? Why, all those pieces come out of the upper end of this ravine," said Raoul. "I didn't know the phosphate you were talking about was like that. But this white rock has been found in recent years. I remember the first I ever saw—I was helping the owner of this farm to dig a well, and after going down about ten feet, we came into that chalk and gave it up. Probably a few pieces of it washed down here."

"It isn't chalk," said Lederfrank seriously. "Have you ever seen anything like it about the country?"

"No. As I said awhile ago—I remember it only in recent years, and principally on this place—because it stopped the digging of the well."

"Who owns the farm?"

"I do," said Raoul grinning—"when I pay for it. A relative of the owners who disappeared, came last week and begged me to take it since it joins the small acreage of Château Morestier."

"We shall investigate the well of which you speak. I am convinced that in the locality, phosphate of commercial value can be found. Perhaps it's on the old farm."

"What use would it be?" asked Raoul.

"Oh, it's put to many uses. If it's of a certain quality it is often used to manufacture fertilizer for agricultural purposes. The Germans formerly made much business with it."

"Ah, I think I remember now."

They walked on for a few steps, then Raoul said meditatively, "I am sure you could depend upon it that there is little of value in the discovery. If there's anything of worth in this part of France it would have been discovered long ago. The fields have been dug into for coal. Men have dug wells—"

"But this white rock stopped you from digging a well."

Raoul did not change his subject: "The railroads have cut through everywhere; bombs have turned up the earth in unexpected places; nation-

alities from every part of the world have crossed and recrossed these poor hills and valleys. You are mistaken, Lederfrank. For me, I would be satisfied to work with you in that business which is so much favored by your race—clothing.”

Lederfrank persisted in holding to his theory. He said, “The sea which washed over these valleys in some long forgotten age, if the theories of mineralogists are correct, deposited the beds of shells and other materials, and I have no doubt that if we should go now to the well you neglected to complete, we would find exposed the products of nature’s factory prepared for us thousands of generations ago.”

“Right you may be. It’s true things of value are often discovered in unexpected places.”

That evening, in the café, over the mugs of claret, Lederfrank and Raoul again reverted to the question of phosphate, and decided to investigate the abandoned well the next morning.

A number of laborers were engaged and the enterprise of prospecting for phosphate began. Two shafts were sunk and it was found that the bed was from forty to fifty feet thick. All tests and analyses demonstrated that the phosphate possessed the qualities most valuable for fertilizer manufacture. Therefore, as if by haphazard good luck, Beauvais and Lederfrank found the business in which they could join.

The Jew rubbed his hands in satisfaction as he

contemplated the ease with which he had engineered his scheme. He was satisfied with the enormous possibilities which his imagination constructed of the phosphate mine. And luck again had ordained that Beauvais should be the owner of the property. Of course, he, Lederfrank, would provide the money—and that, too, without making Beauvais feel uncomfortable concerning his portion in the partnership. Consequently, it was ultimately agreed that Beauvais's subscription to the capital be accepted in the form of the land on which the phosphate had been found, and that Lederfrank would produce funds with which to erect the plant and install the necessary machinery. But when engineers had submitted figures on requirements which would insure successful operations, it was found to be far in excess of the amount agreed upon by the partners. Therefore, Lederfrank generously loaned Beauvais sufficient money on an interest charge of three per cent to enable him to make up the difference in capital. And again the Jew rubbed his hands with satisfaction, in that he had not only accomplished Count Von Essenhendel's scheme, but had also placed a noose about Beauvais's neck—the loan—with which to control him if the team of Frenchman and Jew failed to work together harmoniously during the lifetime of the mines.

CHAPTER XI

A FRENCHMAN'S HOME

PROSPERITY ushered in by the development of the phosphate mines and fertilizer manufacturing plants of Lederfrank changed the even tenor of Ste. Genevieve so that it took on something of the quickened life which followed the coming of peace. Beauvais & Company was at once the important factor in the sleeping village on the Oise. Plenty and happiness came into many homes that had known the pinch of poverty. Chief among these brightened domestic retreats was the Château Mor-estier.

At the suggestion of Jacob Lederfrank, that it would not do for one of the principal owners of the greatest industry in Northern France to continue to live in the ramshackled relic of cavalier days of the *Louises*, Raoul and Hermance accepted a loan from the generous Jew, sufficiently large to pay off the old mortgage and restore the Château to its original splendor. All the rooms were re-furnished; landscape gardeners trimmed and dressed the shrubs in the grounds. Even the fields surrounding the ancient habitation were not overlooked by those having charge of beautifying Mor-estier. An automobile was rolled into the carriage house; a modest staff of servants installed; and,

in general, everything necessary was done to place Raoul and his family on a footing commensurate with his business and respectability.

These changes and additions were justified by the growth of manufacturing plants, and Raoul began almost at once paying back the capital advanced him, and the products from the firm of Beauvais & Company were going to every part of Europe—and to the Americas. Wholesale buyers and scientific men frequently visited Ste. Genevieve, and later Lederfrank and Beauvais were easily the men of the day.

Fortunately, Lederfrank and Beauvais were congenial in their tastes and habits, and got on well in conducting the vast enterprise, and both proved to be men of capacity and good management. There was no feeling on the part of one that the other could not carry out the work which fell to his lot. Racial differences did not disturb the equanimity of relationships that existed. Lederfrank, while secretly following out the designs of the rich German Count, was in conduct towards Raoul Beauvais a gentleman and a friend. He impressed upon his partner and those about him that the thing foremost in his mind was to work honestly to push to immense success the colossal undertaking in which they were engaged. Naturally, Beauvais felt deeply indebted to Lederfrank for his liberal, almost lavish, support. Under such circumstances, race prejudice had no chance.

The beautiful home on the heights housed the joys of perfect love and compatibility. Two small sons and two smaller daughters—besides Paul, the invader's son,—frolicked about the immense place. Paul was now fourteen years of age, of fine poise, pleasant dispositioned, brainy, strong-willed, a forceful child. Alfred, the son next to Paul, was eight years old. Then came Victor, Marie, and *petite* Hermance, the baby, just past her second birthday. Hermance, the mother, and queen of the Château, was a lovely woman in full bloom. A happy marriage, enough of bitter trial to cause her to appreciate the respite, sufficient in worldly goods to bring her ease, a clear horizon into the future, gave her the opportunities to grow and meet the requirements of modern womanhood of the better class. Her children received always her first consideration; then the husband. She found time for reading, and music, and things that brought to her relaxation and sunshine, until something of culture was added to her natural gifts.

Madame Morestier, enfeebled in mind beyond recovery, soon forgot her dislike for Paul—in fact forgot everything in the past—she loved Paul and the other four children. Day after day she sat in her easy chair watching them play, or permitted herself to be led by Hermance or Paul to the gardens.

But Raoul Beauvais had not found his likes and dislikes so easily controlled. He had tried to keep

his promises to Hermance, but the boy Paul had not the same place in his heart as had his own sons. In one particular alone did he keep to his word, and that was not to discuss the matter with Hermance—nor did he refer to his own feelings towards the invader's son, the rankle in his heart that one with German blood should be the first born in his home—and that this intruder should be fairer and better endowed than his own children. The master of the house, in struggling with this cancer in his happiness, tried to soothe his pain by plunging deep into business during the day, and to keep up the artificial protection by reading and studying at night. He spent his evenings in his library, where he received his intellectual friends, among whom was Dr. Anson Joumonville, by that time a leader in politics and activities of national import.

Nevertheless, into this library the boy Paul went daily, despite his younger brothers' pleadings to go with them for play. He hungered for knowledge, and uninvited and unassisted he found for himself in wonderful books, information that satisfied his longings. In this way he began to live far beyond his years. At night, unmindful of his father's disapproval, he would sit for hours in an inconspicuous corner of the library and listen to discussions on world policies with Dr. Joumonville and others, in which Raoul's opinions carried not inconsiderable weight. And when Raoul would

tell him to go to bed, he would modestly beg to remain a little longer, which request was nearly always refused, and, in obedience to his father, he would reluctantly obey.

There was no waste or extravagance in the Beauvais home—plenty of everything did not mean that the usual French care had no part in the economical foresight for days to come. In this atmosphere, a boy of Paul's capabilities had plenty of room in which to develop, and there was nothing that retarded the slightest inclination to expand in those things natural to a child of such fine feelings and generous impulses. Culture and learning came continually through the visits of persons of broad educations, many of them noted for special accomplishments. The easy circumstances made all things possible without the suggestion that lavishness entered into any phase of the day-to-day routine.

Among those who came at intervals were big business men of America, lawyers and diplomats; from England, bankers and members of Parliament; from Paris, the artist, playwright and politician; from Germany an occasional scientist—now and then a musician—and once in a great while a profound university man; and from other countries, men of important walks in life. There came also a sprinkling of famous women—women of refinement and education; women of heart and wholesome lives; women of beauty and taste.

Hence this old Château on the heights of the Oise, by way of the bridge of wealth, became the mecca of the best things to be had in life.

The flowers in this home were the children. They were the trusts committed to Raoul and Hermance for upbringing and training, and the easy circumstances injected into the life of this couple, through the deep-laid schemes of Count Von Essenhendel, made it possible to shut out the grim face of responsibility that frequents the average home.

Raoul and Hermance guided their tender minds without the children's knowing that back of it all was a noisy factory which turned out the funds necessary to maintain the Garden of Eden. Carefully selected governesses and tutors apportioned the studies for these young minds, and everything possible was done that the little ones might grow healthily and uniformly until they were able to take their stations in the whirling duties of the world.

And back of those early days of development and watchful care, Paul gave evidence of leadership. His being older than his brothers in the home, entitled him to command, but while yet under ten years of age he began to show inklings of a master's ability. Then as little more time elapsed, Raoul's clear vision detected these traits and watched them with jealousy. Would the Teuton blood be prominent in overbearing, dictatorial conduct in Paul while yet so young? If so, it should be rigorously curbed. But as unfairly as

Raoul judged, he could not find fault in the child—the French in Paul shown in polite considerateness continually bestowed upon his mother and the younger children. In fact his mother's blood in his veins had tempered and toned down the rough, boorish propensities of the northern race and made Paul, from the time he could toddle about, a diplomatic, safe commander of the younger members of the household. But these commendable things in Paul, instead of winning Raoul, left the latter more dissatisfied than before—the foster father did not feel ashamed that he had harbored ill or improper feelings towards the youngster; he merely tolerated Paul.

Once this growing, deep-seated resentment in the fine man of business came near disrupting the secure foundations of the home on the heights. It was in the spring when the floods of the Oise swept onward to the Seine. Paul, leading the younger boys in play, had established a station on a small island below the village, and remaining there for hours during the day, the flood arose and threatened to sweep the playground. Hermance summoned her husband to rescue the children, and, of course he removed the two younger boys first, and seeing a crest of new flood coming rapidly around the curve in the river, allowed the meanness in his heart to get the better of his judgment, and he tarried almost too long. Hermance discovered then the hate in Raoul that meant

murder and would have cast herself into the turbid waters and saved Paul, had not her master and protector aroused himself in time to snatch the child from death's grasp.

For a long time after this incident Hermance was uneasy and occasionally could see the wild beast of jealousy, which had almost broken prison on that one occasion, peeping threateningly out of the lapses in Raoul's daily conduct.

However, Hermance said nothing; she was afraid to mention that she had uncovered the secret unhappiness of her husband. And once when he related to her in a peculiar state of mind, an incident which he had observed in the play room at the top of the Château, she was near to reproving him for harboring hatred for the child, but she held her peace. Raoul went on to say that he had looked into the play room upon Paul and the three younger children as they pursued their games in the center of a thick rug which had been spread in the middle of the floor. The most prominent of these pastimes was the game of herding and tending a flock of about two dozen toy sheep.

The nurse was sitting far away in one corner, looking on interestedly, but in no way interfering.

Paul directed the pretty game. Instead of putting himself forward as the prominent actor, Marie, then the baby, was skillfully guided in assuming the rôle of imaginary owner of the flock and folds. Paul, Alfred and Victor were commanded to do

the herding and feeding—and the rather difficult job of driving the sheep in of the frequently recurring evenings and putting them into the sheds, always, and with full knowledge of the fact, Paul held exacting control of the situation. His every wish was carried out by the younger children to the letter—but kindness and efficient judgment were still used by him even at that age. This much was admitted by Raoul.

For several minutes Hermance listened to her husband's piqued conversation in which he described the trivial incident in the lives of the children. Well did she know what he was trying to convey to her—the fact that he had lost himself to jealousy. She knew that, in addition to the bitter resentment which Raoul had harbored secretly all those years, he was now discovering that Paul was one who in the future would be guiding and controlling the minds of others.

And, sometime after that, Raoul acknowledged that he had observed the children again. This time they played with an unusual mechanical toy for turning out pressed blocks of moist clay—miniature bricks for playing purposes.

The several machines were run by a small steam engine. The operation consisted of feeding clay and water in through hoppers at different points in the right proportions, and, after passing through the mixer, the mortar resulting was carried into moulds, and firm blocks of precise dimensions came

out on a tiny table. Also by adjusting parts of the simple machine, blocks of varying lengths, sizes, and shapes could be as easily produced. In this particular instance, while being observed by Raoul, the youthful constructors were using plans and photographs furnished with the outfit, as guides to the proceeding of manufacturing materials for the proposed structure.

"Victor," said Paul, "you are running at too high a speed."

Paul, in this case, was the superintendent of construction. The building in hand was a medieval castle. Victor, the youngest, was running the machinery; Alfred put the blocks in place on the walls.

"I can't see what difference that makes—it turns them out quicker."

"Mr. Builder," said Paul to Alfred, "do you notice anything wrong with your blocks?"

"They are softer than the others. Some are not so perfect," replied the very serious-minded Alfred.

"Well," insisted Victor, "I don't see that fast running of the machinery could have anything to do with that."

"It has. You can find it out for yourself. You and Alfred will want to figure out that while I arrange the special lengths for the round towers."

Alfred went over to the press and watched the moulds being crowded in full of soft mixture which was then quickly jabbed by the compressors.

The regular bits of clay thus formed were quickly caught up by the revolving cylinders, shaped perfectly, and dumped as finished products from the crude-material hoppers. In other words, the machine was being crowded beyond its capacity. However, Victor did not see why the work should not be perfect. He was not even disposed to take the necessary interest in the matter—actually added more fuel to the fire-box.

"Come, Victor," said Alfred, "we must find out why fast running will not give us best results."

"Oh, the blocks are all right. When I run machinery I like to hear it hum."

Victor's tone and manner showed that he was bored by even the suggestion that he learn something.

There was open rebellion in the works.

Paul sat at an improvised table studying his plans, but Victor's words were not lost—nor his manner, for Raoul, the father, looking on from his place of vantage, saw that the invader's son was not only observing the situation, but solving it as well. Paul saw that the engineer proposed to run things his way, blocks or no blocks.

There was a hush in the atmosphere, a moment of critical import, even though the manufacturing was child's play, and the problem one that is usually got over with by a fist fight.

"Come here, boys," said Paul in the most pleasant tones.

Mr. Beauvais watched to see what would happen.

The two younger brothers came over to Paul, Victor a trifle sulky and suspicious.

Paul proceeded with a smile on his face. "We haven't chosen a name for this castle, have we?"

"No," said Victor, casting an eye back at his hissing, fuming engine.

"You see the name will be carved over the main entrance," went on Paul, pointing to his plans.

"I know a good name," shouted Victor.

"So do I," said Alfred excitedly.

"Let me name this one, Paul," the sturdy engineer began, assuming the pleading tones that he had discovered would win for him.

"Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. The one who finds out first why the blocks are not coming out right and explains it to me, shall have the privilege of naming the castle."

Immediately both boys were bending over the moulds and watching every movement.

Victor went over to his engine, slowed it down a certain number of revolutions, and then came back to find that the blocks were coming out better.

"Oh, I was just running it too fast, Paul."

"Yes, all of us know that. But why will the blocks not come out just as well when they are being turned out so quickly?"

"Fast running is the cause. But why?"

"I guess," said Victor, now looking important, "the press don't get all the water out."

"That's it, Vic—the blocks don't have the required time to 'set,' as the book of instructions calls it."

Victor proudly selected the name "Raoul" for the castle, and went back to his engine satisfied.

Paul went on with his plans, first measuring the paper drawing, then going over and making comparison with the actual building, and, while there was a glow of triumph on his brow, he concealed it from his brothers.

The father turned away more convinced than ever that Paul possessed abilities which his brothers lacked, and this further confirmation did not please Beauvais. His description of the incident to his wife carried with it the undertow of dissatisfaction. Hermance felt sorry for him, yet she knew that Raoul could not help his resentment that the invader's son should be the leader and the superior of his own children. However, she kept silent, and prayed that a way might be found to remove the bitterness from her husband's heart.

CHAPTER XII

THE STING OF INJUSTICE

GRADUALLY, and perhaps unconsciously for a time, Raoul Beauvais went on observing Paul's development, and gave expression to his uneasiness merely by relating what he saw to Hermance. Of course, this state of mind could not be endured by even a careful business man without his discovering the canker himself. The French are usually fair-minded, generous, whole-hearted; but jealousy seems to spoil these attributes in the French quicker than in most races. Hence in time the father acknowledged to Hermance that Paul displeased him.

Said he to her, "Paul is better endowed mentally than my own boys. He is good and true and all that, but how can I stand it?"

"I understand, Raoul, but you must be charitable," said Hermance, knowing full well that the advice was lost.

Alfred and Victor were bright, industrious fellows; quick to learn; almost brilliant in some things, and, one might say above the average, but Paul led them. In studies at school, in games, in making friends, Paul was their master and leader. He also ruled the boys in the village. Men, women, and children liked him, and it began to be

whispered about the community that Paul Beauvais would some day be an extraordinary man.

At all times it is extremely difficult for parents to refrain from showing partiality among their children. If there is an interloper in the circle, naturally it is easier to make differences adverse to him. In early childhood days, Beauvais was closely occupied in building the phosphate-fertilizer, and did not observe everything that went on, but as years lengthened and he discovered Paul's capabilities as illustrated in the two incidents previously mentioned, he was quick to catch up the continual din of praise for Paul. Of course, at intervals he did try hard to overcome jealousy—for he was a good man, and knew that jealousy and hate are wrong—nevertheless, he was too human not to feel a secret regret that one of his own sons should not have been the superior in his family.

By degrees he allowed jealousy to unbalance his judgment, and he saw Paul's actions always in the less favorable light; and Beauvais, in brooding over his disappointment, would say to himself: "It is the German showing in Paul—I must get it out of him or kill him!"

Then feverishly he would watch from day to day while Paul raced, as it were, to young manhood, and the green eyes of jealousy discovered imaginary traits of Teutonic character. The foster-father went so far as to comment aloud to himself as he walked home one day: "The German is big

in Paul—the insane desire to rule, the savage overbearing, the cool, calculating setting of traps to win;—he has all these hellish propensities!”—He clenched his hands and vowed to conquer the boy and make of him a Frenchman.

Few men are broad-minded enough to trace strong talents in their children to the mothers. Had Raoul Beauvais studied Paul as carefully and impartially as he should, he would have found that the child inherited all his good qualities from Madame Beauvais—and much of his intellect and strength of personality, for Paul was Hermance’s child in spite of her prenatal protests. The German was in Paul, too—the methodical plodding, the astute, orderly mind, the physique, the thirst for scientific knowledge; but these were commendable, and Beauvais should have been fair enough to have admired them even though they had come to Paul from some fourth generation of apes. Of course, Beauvais attributed them to the tainted German blood. Paul also had deep in him other German traits that might never have awakened had not Beauvais been so unwise as to arouse them in his blundering rebukes during that dangerous period of transit from boyhood to manhood.

In no sense was Paul vain. He did not even know that people in Ste. Genevieve thought so well of him. Beauvais misrepresented by the method of indirect allusion so that at one time Paul believed his neighbors to harbor unfavorable opin-

ions of him. This false impression might have continued had not Paul's mother discovered it and been thoughtful enough to correct it. She possessed too much wisdom to allow her own child to become embittered of the world while so young. Therefore, by her watchful care, Paul was enabled to live a simple unaffected life, and, in response for love, was obedient, kind, attentive, and thoughtful of others—wholly unconscious of being objectionable to any one.

He and his brothers went to Paris to school, and returned at intervals to spend happy days at home. Unfortunately, it was about this time that Paul noticed a coldness of his supposed father in that the latter was not so talkative to him as to Victor and Alfred, but Paul put it down to the worries of the business, and that he was older than Victor and Alfred. Mother remained the same, and after all that meant more to Paul than all else besides.

When at home Paul continued to frequent the library of evenings when Mr. Beauvais entertained his friends. Upon returning for his vacation, at the time he first discovered his father's coolness towards him, he still continued to go to the library, although he sometimes felt uncomfortable at the restraint and silence of the man whom he loved as father, and believed to be his father. On these occasions in the library, Paul was especially glad when Dr. Anson Joumonville came, for then he heard Mr. Beauvais and the Doctor discuss history

and politics. These were absorbing subjects, and, while the men exchanged views, or took issue with one another on disputed points, he sat entranced, and longed to acquire sufficient grasp of both branches to enable him to say something himself.

Just then the people of the earth were being threatened with another war. This and that in the treaties signed at the close of the great war had been violated. Taxes had continued higher than previous to 1914, and would continue so for at least a hundred years to come to pay for the stupendous expenditures of the old war.

Statesmen in every quarter of the Globe had been considering the formation of a League of Nations. The proposal had been made several times during the continuance of the world war of 1914, and, in fact, Lloyd George and President Woodrow Wilson advocated the organization of such a league at or before the conclusion of peace with the Germans and Austrians in 1919, and diplomats and wise men were opposed to the breaking out of further silly quarrels, and thought on spasmodically, year by year, about some way to weld nations into a common union for universal protection. Other men of political renown called up a proposal that had been advanced during the great war; namely, to organize all the countries into an International Republic in which each member pledged that nation's army as a unit in the forces of all to punish any state or kingdom, re-

public or empire, which presumed to disturb the peace of the universe. The scheme had been pronounced Utopian, and national leaders were timid about permitting their names to be used in connection with it. Many men argued it could not be done. The English writer, H. G. Wells, declared:

"The League of Nations is up against an idea which saturates our histories, saturates the minds of statesmen, saturates the press, saturates European thought and the thought of many spirited states outside Europe, and that is what I call the Great Power idea in human affairs . . .

"Every state is conceived of as a Power, either already a Great Power or as a little sly, watchful state, waiting for its chance to become a Great Power. All the proceedings of a state under this obsession are shaped by something called a Policy, which is no less and no more than a scheme to grab some coveted advantage, to sow dissensions between dangerous rivals, to undermine some powerful antagonist . . .

"It is for us who survive to see that mankind is not, in a mood of weariness and reaction and resentment, cheated by its old machinery and its stale traditions of the harvests of peace."

But however much the League of Nations was needed, as the years of the new régime rolled on

from 1919, men and sovereignties fooled themselves by working at the plan without actually intending to perfect it. In keeping with the usual carelessness and unconcern of humanity for its own good, the proposal was allowed to drag and become soiled with cobwebs of neglect—until new mutterings made foundations tremble.

The International Republic was a favorite theme with Paul, and whenever it was up for consideration in the home library, he ventured, with due deference, to ask questions of Beauvais and Dr. Joumonville. One night, in particular, when war was threatened again, he took great interest in Dr. Joumonville's progressive ideas on this subject, and unintentionally interrupted his father in his eagerness to learn more and more about what was going on in diplomatic groups regarding plans to launch a campaign for bringing about the union.

"Paul," said Mr. Beauvais sternly, "you are too young to interrupt gentlemen when they are talking. Go to bed."

The bitterness in the man's voice surprised the boy—and Dr. Joumonville. With the promptness of a budding soldier, Paul arose, bowed, and said:

"Father, I beg your pardon. It never occurred to me to interrupt you. I was only interested and forgot myself."

"To bed, sir. I've had quite sufficient of your self-importance."

Paul obeyed instantly. No one had ever spoken

to him in such a manner before, and he wondered what he could have said that was so offensive. He went to his room and wept. He reviewed his thoughtless conduct—believed it to have been thoughtless since it had angered his father. For hours he lay on his bed awake, and tried to remember every word he had said, when he had said it, and with what inflection. Failing to comprehend the wrong in any part of his innocent inquiries, he resolved to hasten down to Mr. Beauvais early in the morning, and make it perfectly clear that no impertinence was meant.

"Father, said he after breakfast, "I'm very sorry for what I did last night. You must have misconstrued something, for it never entered my heart to offend you."

Beauvais momentarily felt ashamed of himself, and somewhat softened in his resolve to curb the boy's leaning toward ascendancy.

"That's all right, Paul, "only see to it that you're more careful next time;" thus trailing a cloud across the bright sky which his open words had cleared.

Other vacations came, and the chasm between Raoul and the boy yearly widened. Deeper and deeper Beauvais regretted the presence of the invader's son in his home, knowing that in him was a man who, when he would be clothed in the physique of maturity would declare himself—and possibly outshine Victor and Alfred.

Rumors of wars passed, and discussions of how to form a union of nations continued. The Beauvais library remained as the private assembly for deciding these questions locally, and Paul persisted in occupying his inconspicuous corner in that chamber to listen in silence to all that the wise men who came had to say and how they said it; for Paul was conscious of an untried power within himself—in spite of the lack of sympathy from Beauvais—and stubbornly resolved to be prepared against the day when he should be called upon to justify his existence.

CHAPTER XIII

HIS MOTHER UNDERSTOOD

PAUL watched his father walk off down the winding road that led from the Château Morestier, until he disappeared behind a cluster of low-branched trees at the foot of the hill. The youth's eyes filled with tears as he thought of recent rebukes administered by the man, and he knew not why his father should hate him—and bestow lavish favors upon Victor and Alfred. Paul shivered while an uncomfortable fear crept over him. Would Raoul Beauvais ultimately drive him from the home? Was the rebuke, that particular morning, to be the beginning of a lasting estrangement? Could it be that the strong man, who had been so successful with Jacob Lederfrank, in the firm of Beauvais & Co., would now turn his back upon the son as he was going into young manhood? A disturbing blackness seemed to envelop Paul, and he felt dizzy.

"Come, Paul," said Alfred, as he appeared around a cluster of rose-bushes with rod and fishing tackle, "this is a fine day to fish below the great forest belt. Victor has gone on with the other boys."

"Can't to-day, Al. I'll take a gallop across country, instead. I'm not up to myself this morning."

"You do look frowsy—you stuck too long in the library last night."

Paul made no comment. He remembered regretfully that he had betrayed his own unhappiness, and casting a quick glance at his brother, wondered if he knew.

"All right, then, I'll go on without you this time."

"Do, Al, for I don't feel like going. I'll go some other time."

"As you say. Since I planned the trip on the river, I shall go. I would rather stay and ride with you, though, and had the boys not gone on, I'd beg off and go with you."

Alfred ran and leaped over the hedge, and was soon lost to view.

Paul turned his thoughts inward again. The main support of his foundation had been wrenched out, it seemed to him—at the time he needed a father, that father was lacking in sympathy; and, feeling deeply his loss as irretrievable, he became disconsolate. From the moment of his earliest recollection, he had dreamed of the day when he would go into the factory offices and work with his father. It was his highest ambition to be near this ideal man of his childhood, and learn the business from him. Was he not this man's heir?—the first-born, entitled to take up where the man laid down? But would his father want him now? Would not his questions annoy father, and widen

the breach? Sick at heart, he quitted the veranda where he had been standing, and hurried into the shaded paths of the garden at the rear of the old Château, there to ponder and to fathom his misery.

Below the spring waters of the Oise gurgled on past willow-ribbed banks, and white-capped clouds shifted swiftly across the French-blue skies. Down in the village—since the founding of Beauvais & Co., rapidly growing into a young city—the voices of merry tradesmen were wafted up to the lonely youth, as he walked slowly through the network of paths. A young, clumsily-feathered thrush floundered awkwardly ahead of him, uttering cries of distress as he approached. Swiftly the mother bird intervened and chirped, encouraging it until her baby gained the mastery of his wings. An old squirrel scampered uneasily between him and her frisky twins. The proud little bantam ruffled her feathers and became unduly excited for the safety of her chicks. Thus nature and her creatures, one and all, depended upon mother for succor in the hour of trouble. Paul, keen in perception, did not fail to catch the significance of the lessons before him and halted as his countenance brightened. The balmy air was permeated with the song of the living—hope and triumph were all about him. Why droop in such surroundings when he, too, could go to one for sure counsel?

And already she was coming towards him. From her bower of wistaria at the upper end of

the garden, she had marked his uncertain step, and, on drawing nearer, was pained to note sadness written on his face.

"What is it, Paul?" she pleaded anxiously, laying her hand on his arm.

Never before had she seen his brow troubled in serious meditations. He was so boyish and gay that she could scarcely believe he was troubled, while scarcely on the border-line of young manhood. She knew that eighteen years had come and gone since he lay for the first time in a wicker-basket in the open, kicking his bare heels in the summer sunshine, but only now could she realize that stern accountability had claimed him, and that he wrestled with some problem or disappointment which tried his soul.

The young man was confused. He was not prepared for his mother's direct question, and answered haltingly.

"I was just going to you."

"Then you were thinking of me, Paul, in your need," she asked proudly, for Hermance was a true and wise mother, and was glad that her boy, in his first trouble, should seek her.

"Yes, mother, I need you."

"Then come. We shall go to the honeysuckle trellis, where we may be alone."

"Alfred and Victor have gone," said Paul, feeling a glow in his heart with the first touch of sympathy.

"Yes, I know. But even when we are alone, Paul, it is sweet to make certain of it." Hermance waited as if endeavoring to say something further, but finished with the commonplace remark:

"Then we shall be out of hearing of the servants."

Madame Beauvais took his arm and led him through the rose-splashed arbors. Her step was light and airy, and a bright spot mounted each cheek. She had begun her great adventure with this lad, and, while next to him she loved her husband, when she found Paul neglected or hurt, she was ready to come to his aid with a pride and strength of resolution that distinguish the French woman above all other nationalities. And the while her ears were open to the song of the birds, and her spirits responded to the gaiety of spring, she walked along with her son, hoping that she might be able to correct this thing that had come into his life—should it be wrong; if right, that she might clear the vista of his future.

The large bunches of red and white blossoms that hung overhead brushed against mother and son as they passed by, leaving glistening drops of dew on their cheeks. The mother reached only to her son's shoulders. He was big enough and strong enough to have carried her. She looked into his handsome, soft-skinned, open face, and searched his deep blue eyes that dropped a steady, trustful gaze, and reached up and smoothed back

his light, brown locks. She knew he was yearning for help. She could almost read his thoughts, for she had watched him grow with greater intentness perhaps than any other mother, except Mary of Nazareth. She rejoiced at his elastic step, his erect carriage. She was proud of his young, untried muscles, and she believed that he was able and sufficiently equipped to take his place in the sterner arena of life.

They sat under the arched canopy of pink ramblers, each delicately-petaled bloom standing out like a rosette of joy to beautify the retreat. The son plucked one of the gayest buds, and fastened it in his mother's hair. For a second he ran his approving eye over her morning gown, and praised her as the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

"Speak, now that we are alone," she said, sympathy oozing from every articulate sound of her voice, "not even your sisters will be up at this hour. No one will know."

His finely-cut mouth twitched slightly, and his hand sought hers for strength.

"What has hurt you, Paul, my son?"

"Father."

"Oh, Paul!"

"Yes; though I must have been—at—at fault—that's what I want to ask you, mother."

"Tell me all about it."

"It was last night in the library. Dr. Joumon-

ville talked with father about the International Republic. You know I'm interested in this subject, and have been reading about it for months. It was projected back in the world war of 1914, but like all other things that come to civilization, it has been dragged on these years without gaining the necessary support. I'm interested in it, as I said, and when Dr. Joumonville was telling about the position taken yesterday in the House of Commons in England regarding a bill recently introduced to provide ways and means of bringing about an expression from citizens—to commit them as the backbone of Britain to a fixed policy of international union. This is really the first actual step in the right direction—all the rest has been newspaper talk. I don't remember how I got into the argument—but father had opposed the Doctor on something, and I got in a word here and there. My interest must have swept me past father, for before I knew it, Dr. Joumonville was directing his remarks at me. Then——”

“Go on.”

“Then father accused me of interrupting him, and ordered me to go to bed, speaking in angry tones.”

“And then.”

“I got up, apologized, and would have gone without feeling more than surprised had father not said cuttingly: He didn't care to hear further from me; that my self-importance had annoyed him

—he had quite enough of my self-importance! Of course, I went.

Madame Beauvais dropped her eyes to the ground.

“I know, mother, something is wrong. During the last vacations, I have noticed father’s indifference towards me—he has, on some occasions, purposely ignored me. What have I done?”

This simple question was filled with the bitterness of youth at its first full discovery of the world’s cruelty. Madame Beauvais still hung her head and pondered her reply. How was she to answer this fine boy at her side, who had found the mainstay of his youth lacking?—the man whom he had loved as father not there to encourage him when he stepped upon the solid, troublesome highway of manhood

Lamely, she replied:

“Perhaps something you said was misconstrued by your father.”

“I thought so, too, but I was ready to make any explanation, and father is clever enough to know when something is intended or not. How could he believe me so rude and thoughtless as to offend him? I’ve thought it out for hours—ever since he hurt me so much, and I cannot for the life of me discover my fault. My questions, the ones that got me in and supplanted father in the conversation, were leading—such as any one would have asked. I don’t see how father could blame

me for any of them, and I am sure Dr. Joumonville would support me in my claim of innocence."

Hermance knew the jealous heart of her husband had finally rebelled. Paul had perhaps shown keener perceptions of the subject being discussed, and the elder man had recognized that, as the invader's son had gradually outstripped Victor and Alfred, he would now go on and shine above the father. The mother was prompted to tell Paul the entire story and be done with it, but the aged priest had advised her to wait. So again she parried with the main issue and asked:

"Did you speak to your father this morning before he went to work?"

"I did. I was as humble as I knew how to be—and he accepted my apology. But, mother, even then his closing words drew a shadow in front of me. I feel that I have something to combat, and it is a folly not to know what it is. What have I done to this man I have loved always? Have I, to your knowledge, offended him?"

"No, Paul. You have done nothing. You must not mind this, son. I am sure your father will not be harboring unpleasant thoughts of the incident last night, and all I can say is that you will do well to avoid the slightest controversy with him. The business has been exceedingly worrying on your father lately, and, no doubt, he said more than he intended."

"But, mother, I've made mistakes before—mistakes that I recognized, and when I went to father to ask forgiveness, he always granted my request so ungraciously—differently, I mean, from the way he has treated Victor and Alfred."

"Oh, yes, Paul, but you are nearly six years older than Victor and Alfred, and, no doubt, your father has unintentionally made that difference in ages. Now, now, my boy, you must learn to be brave."

Paul was silent for a moment. He knew instinctively that his mother was not permitted to give him the help he wanted. He did not know what that something was, but out just in front hung a chasm into which he might stumble at any moment. He also knew that his mother was worried. Did she fear his father, and for that reason refuse to help him? But Paul did not blame her. He could see that she ransacked her brains to find a rope to throw to his assistance, and he decided to wait until she might be permitted to come to his aid.

She made one other attempt to strengthen him.

"Paul, have you ever heard that fathers often take a sudden dislike to their sons when they reach the first days of manhood?"

"I don't—y-es. Edouard Comangier, in Paris, told me that. He said his father suddenly turned against him for no earthly reason, and for about two years was not at all as he had been before. I

never thought of that," said Paul, catching desperately at the idea to drown his grief.

"Well, that may be one of the inexplainable eccentricities that accounts for your father's actions."

While Paul was not fully satisfied, he admitted: "Probably that explains it. But why can that be in father—I seem to remember slights from him at least ten years back."

"That I cannot tell. Perhaps some day you will find out. For my sake, Paul, pay no attention to it. That's the only way. Just go on about your work or pleasure. Forget he has hurt you."

Paul promised. He thanked his mother gratefully, and tried to make her feel that she had helped him.

But she knew she had not. Some day all could be explained to him, and then she would reap the happy reward of full confidence, the suggestion of which had, that same hour, caused her to be dizzy with happiness; so she went on saying, as if inventing an antidote for the real portion she should have given Paul: "But be a man, Paul. You are now facing life with all it may demand in you. You cannot afford to be whimpering over insults or pin-pricks. Fear no man. Let no man influence you with what he says, even though he shouts it from house-tops with the approval of the master of the world. Think everything out for yourself. Study this International Republic. Read the history of nations. Go to Dr. Joumonville and talk

with him. Seek out other people who are willing to talk with young men. Make friends. Cultivate power of mind, force of character, and God-fearing initiative." Paul awoke in response to her appeal. All the force she would have in her son was in Paul Beauvais, and it needed but the chance to develop. A mother's stirring order to go forward was all that was necessary for Paul. He would do his duty, and the thirst for a man's part was already urging him to hasten to take up the struggle.

"Good mother," he said, kissing her tenderly, "that's just the talk I needed. Something told me to go to you, and I had started when you came."

"Will you always come to me when you are in trouble?"

He said "Yes" so resolutely that she knew he meant it.

"Paul, don't be afraid to ask me any questions you may wish, and at any time. I'll answer you without hesitation."

Hermance hoped then Paul would put the question direct to her that would uncover the unhappiness of his youth. But the boy did not do so; and they turned again to walk through the gardens. Their conversation was changed to other things, and by and by she said:

"What are you going to do this morning?"

"I shall gallop across country unless you wish me to go somewhere with you."

"No, ride, Paul. I was just going to suggest it. You need to take plenty of outdoor exercise. You will complete your courses in Paris this winter, and after that you will be going to England to college."

"Has father consented to that?"

"Oh, yes, I've arranged it."

"I shall ride then. This morning I'm going through the hills and forests. I may not get back until afternoon. At four I've promised to take Grandfather Joumonville out in the car. To-day is his birthday—ninety years old, you know. Then at five I shall call for you, and we can go by and pick up Father Pelletier—he's two years older than Grandpa Joumonville."

Hermance went to the entrance with him, and saw him mount his noble horse, Louis XIV, and dash off up the Heights Road towards the east. He sat firmly in the saddle, and the fine figure, lofty air, the bearing that commands attention and leads where men will or no, swelled the mother pride in her bosom, and she turned her face to the Château again, feeling sorry for her husband, Raoul Beauvais.

CHAPTER XIV

AN EVENT

PAUL'S horse, Louis XIV, knew the pace his young master liked best, and clearing the top of the heights, he sniffed the breezes of the plains and flat country beyond, and set out at a lively canter for the forest roads. His instinct told him that a strong will held sway in the quiet man-boy who sat him so easily, and Louis took delight in obeying his evenly modulated commands. It was not necessary to touch his flanks with the silver spurs. He knew Paul carried no whip; but on and on he flew like a winged-horse of Greece's mythical days, his mane and tail streaming in the air, and his black coat glistening like a meteor of polished ebony.

Rider and horse dashed into the Robincourt Forest. Mile after mile of whirling, twirling trees disappeared behind them, until the dense interior was reached. Here Paul liked to walk his steed and listen to the subdued moaning of the boughs. Accordingly he drew rein, and Louis XIV slackened pace, blowing out a gust of the reserve air in his powerful lungs. Straight onward for two miles there was not a bend in the road. The overhanging density of foliage made the opening resemble a tunnel piercing an emerald mountain. Nowhere

did the sun strike through, but its flood sifted in tremulous shimmers from layers of green pine needles to façades of drooping buckeye leaves, scalloped oak, bristling cedars, and myriads of other leaflets, to vanquish gloom and lend a soothing, kindly light to the traveler. Paul forgot the world of study and toil, and whole-heartedly admired the extravagant glory of wild nature. There in pristine simplicity was peace. Each twig and branch performed the work assigned, and grumbled not that the station was low, nor boasted when it was on a pinnacle next to the clouds. And here and there, where hissing half-ton missiles of the late war had ripped avenues through the thick tops, no complaint was flaunted—the trunks had merely grown big rounded bulges to cover the wounds; jagged, splintered stubs of saplings had spread umbrellas, ribbed with a thousand willing limbs, to conceal the check to their towering magnificence. The soft, loam-cushioned roadbed muffled the tread of the horse's feet. The young man's fancy drifted hither and thither among the noble monarchs of the wood, and he day-dreamed the fairy tales of youth. Louis XIV caught the subtle music of the wilderness and moved along by short, languid steps, with his ears up, and his neck craning to enable him to hear and see all that might be hidden in the sweet-scented shades.

Suddenly in the forward end of the hushed lane, a horse bearing a hatless rider hove in sight. The

horse came on at a dead run. The rider's raven hair swished out wildly behind, and her crimson habit fluttered over the back of the runaway charger. She crouched on his withers and looked fixedly the way his nose was pointing. The horse's great white body squatted low, and his legs sped so rapidly that he appeared to be coming on fearful wheels. The rider, a slender girl, clutched the bridle reins with both hands, but the fright-maddened animal held the bit in his teeth, and came on like a bolt hurled from some terrible mortar. Would he dart into the dense forest to mangle himself and rider against a tree, or would she be thrown and killed as he ran?

The invader's son looked on for a moment with alarm, and then planned quickly to rescue the girl. He swung Louis XIV out of the way. Had he attempted to bar the road, he would have sent the oncoming horse out of his course among the gnarled trunks to certain death. But he waited on the roadside, and on and on the runaway came, the cloaked hum of the horse's hoofs sounding like the roaring of a waterfall.

Paul could see the girl's face. It was as white as marble, but her brow was knitted in determination, and she sat steadily in her saddle, resolved to ride the infuriated beast until he stopped. Paul's horse stood on his hind legs and snorted. When the whirlwind passed, Louis laid his ears back and gave chase. Paul pulled him to the right side and loosened the reins.

The girl cast her pursuer one quick, grateful glance, then the race went on— How would it end?

Soon Louis XIV was stretching his sleek head close by the right hip of the foaming runaway. His black nose crawled up inch by inch until it rested stationary near the girl's elbow. She saw it—the distended nostrils, the sporting gleam in the large, lustrous eyes,—then the handsome head of Louis lay almost in her lap. She took courage. The blood came again in her lovely face, and she looked back once more.

The black head moved once more in steady gains until the horses ran neck to neck. Paul saw the crossing not two hundred yards away, and made desperate efforts to seize the runaway horse's bit. Louis objected to that proceeding, and prevented his master from accomplishing his design. And just then the mouth-piece snapped, leaving the reins dangling uselessly in the girl's hands. She shot a helpless look at Paul.

"Free your foot from the stirrup," Paul shouted.

Seeing that she understood and obeyed, he thrust out his left arm and lifted her deftly on to his own horse.

Louis XIV jogged down to a walk, then stopped. Paul held her safely on the broad, flat pommel of his saddle, and they watched the freed horse swing into a byway at the crossing, lose his footing, fall, and roll entirely over. The next moment he was up,

and they heard the clatter of his feet as he ran out of sight.

"And there is where you would have been killed," said Paul, speaking after a sigh of relief.

"Yes, and you have saved my life."

"Louis XIV helped to do it."

"Ah! yes. He's a beauty."

Louis looked back wonderingly at the flaming addition to his burden.

"He's asking how I got here!" she exclaimed, laughing merrily.

"Oh, he knows. Didn't you know how closely he crowded up to your side. It made him mad when I persisted in trying to catch the bridle—he wanted me to pick you off at once. He really gave me the idea."

She smoothed Louis' arched neck, and began to breathe with more ease.

"I was frightened, though," she said with a little shiver.

"I thought of the crossing, and, as you saw by what happened, I snatched you off in the nick of time."

"Yes, you did it neatly—how fortunate you were coming this way."

"I ride here often," he said.

"Now that I'm safe, how am I to get home?"

"Why, I shall take you home," said Paul, surprised that she should have asked the question.

"Perhaps, Mademoiselle, you will tell me your name

—and where you live. My name is Paul Beauvais.”

“My name is Yvonne de Robincourt,” she replied, looking at him full in the face for the first time—and she was very near him. Paul was not conscious that he still held her tightly to the pommel of his saddle, and she only at that moment noticed that she was grasping his left wrist with both her tiny hands. Her wealth of hair also lay in wavy folds over his shoulder.

They blushed.

Paul slipped off the horse and helped her into the saddle from her perch, before speaking.

“Monsieur Pierre de Robincourt is your father—and this is his forest?”

“Yes,” she replied, “and Raoul Beauvais is your father. I know him. He and my father are friends.”

“Yes, mademoiselle, and I have seen your father twice. My father often speaks of him.”

“This is an odd introduction for their children,” she said, laughing and looking at her rescuer again.

“The meeting is odd enough,” he said, also laughing, “but our parents will, no doubt, excuse the irregularity.”

“Quite; mamma and papa will be grateful, and I—I cannot find words to thank you.”

Yvonne beamed on him prettily, and brushed her hair free, so that it fell over her back. The tips

spread out in liberal wavelets on Louis XIV's glossy coat.

Paul shortened the straps, placed her foot in his stirrup, then taking the reins from over the horse's head, he turned about and started towards her home, walking by her side.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"I'm starting home with you."

"It's too bad you must walk."

"But this is a glorious place. I have often walked and led my horse while passing this way."

"I shall walk, too," she said gayly, and put out her hand to be assisted to the ground.

Paul nonchalantly gathered her up and set her feet on the earth, as he would have done his youngest sister. She did not struggle foolishly in his strong grasp, but accepted it as a matter of course. She had asked for assistance, and he gave it generously and effectually, without the least timidity.

A little slyly she peered up into his frank, honest face. He was not so terrible looking as her mother had said most young men were—not at all rude and boorish. Really he seemed quite as nice as any of her girl friends—only, of course, he was a young man, big and tall, erect, strong, handsome. For the time being she forgot all about her father's fine horse she had stolen out for a ride. This experience was a rare treat—after the frightful runaway. Had she not begged her mother to let her see a young man, and talk with him just once. She

remembered some small boys, but that was long ago. She had reached the age of sixteen now, and felt different than she did when she played with dolls—doubtless the boys had changed, too. Anyway, she did want to see for herself. In most things mother's word was not questioned; but why should both father and mother want her to be handled with so much care. Her mother had made her believe all sorts of horrid things about young men. It was not true that all of them were so bad, for here was one in this great forest who was not at all horrid. He had borne her in front of him on a horse, and could have run away with her—but he did nothing of the kind. She immediately made up her mind that she liked Paul, and she was glad that he was going home with her. She would show her father and mother that this young man was an exception to their ideas of the race.

Paul was not shackled with all this elaboration, for no one had set him against girls. In fact, he rather liked them—or imagined he would like them. His sisters were deliciously sweet, and the plainly dressed peasant girls all seemed to be kind and good. He had always watched curiously the girls he saw, whether they were rich or poor, clad in silks, or gowned in coarse cotton. They had about them a charm he could not explain, and yet he had never dared speak to one. He had been too busy with his studies. Therefore, he ran his eyes over Yvonne from head to foot with a quiet calmness that sat-

ified him. A quick conviction settled in his mind that this was a rare specimen of all the girls he had seen; and yet he had been to school in Paris and might have been more versed in femininity had he so chosen. He walked on silently for a few paces, feeling Louis' warm nose touching his hand now and again, and wondering where to pick up the conversation. At last he said:

"You ride often, Mademoiselle Yvonne, and ride well."

"Do I?—mamma and papa scold me for running away on the horses, and I shall be in their disfavor this time."

"Then you were taking a ride without their knowledge?"

"Yes; that was papa's big horse and he is very vicious, but I was not afraid of him until he began to run."

"What caused him to run," Paul asked, glancing over her carefully again to reassure his first impression.

"Oh, he was frightened. The mail air-ship passed over, and the engineer, or someone, carelessly dropped a large tin box of some sort. It fell just in front of Dante and burst with a terrific report. He began immediately to run for his life. Poor fellow! It wasn't altogether his fault."

"What will Dante do?" asked Paul.

"Oh, he'll go home after a while. He sometimes gets away from papa, and he always comes

home at his leisure. He never will hurry, though he'll come in before it's dark."

"Where do you usually ride?"

"In the fields at home. I came to the wood this morning, because I was tired seeing the same things all the time."

Yvonne looked about her at the profuse sylvan growths, and continued:

"It must be grand to be a man and go wherever you wish."

Her sparkling black eyes sought his in a kind of wistful inquiry—how was it being a man anyway?—she seemed to ask.

"I suppose we do enjoy some things that you cannot. Still, I don't know. I don't know very much about girls."

"Don't you?" she asked. "That's funny. Mamma always told me that the trouble with most young men is they know too many girls. Of course, I don't know what men do except papa. You are the first young man I have ever spoken to. You are just like the young men in the story-books. Mamma has insisted that story-book young men are not real—just got up to mislead young girls."

Paul laughed at her childish simplicity.

"Well, I'm a real young man. I have emerged from no fiction book to dally with your imagination, and no fairy is going to appear before us, wand in hand, and cause me and Louis XIV to float away in space."

"Oh! I'm glad," she said, with a frankness that was very pleasing to him.

"I'm certainly glad to have been the means of disillusioning you."

"I wasn't deceived. I knew there must be nice young men in the world—I didn't believe mamma. I told her so, too. If there never had been any nice young men, how could people write such books?"

"What books do you read?"

"Oh, mamma has given me some very nice books, but—sh! I've found a lot of papa's up in the garret, and I took them out one at a time. They are ever so much more interesting than the ones mamma buys for me."

For more than an hour they walked along side by side, the tips of her fingers resting on his arm, while they two talked as naturally as children. They had become comfortably acquainted. Some of the things they told each other were simple and amusing. Other things were quaint and sweet, because they came right out of pure, unspoiled hearts. Just as they began to see the massive stone palace of the de Robincourts through the first outward opening in the forest Paul said in the same unaffected strain:

"Mademoiselle Yvonne, I want you to be my sweetheart—will you?"

"Why, yes!" she exclaimed gleefully—"just like my pretty story-book says."

"I shall speak to your father promptly," added Paul, becoming very grave.

"Papa is gruff, you know, and he says rude things sometimes. You mustn't mind him, though. Leave that to me. I shall have my way. You know I wheedle him into my views after a time."

As they drew near the house there was great commotion. Dante had just come in limping with Yvonne's little saddle hanging in shreds under him. Both father and mother were distracted. The horses were then being brought for men to ride out in search for her torn and bleeding body, when lo! they saw her coming, quietly chatting with this strong young man.

"Yvonne," cried both father and mother, as they ran to meet her.

"My child, my child," went on the mother in the same hysterical way that mothers have always done. "I feared you were dead! Oh! I'm so glad you're safe."

Stern Monsieur de Robincourt also joined in, laying aside his dignified coldness for the moment. "My daughter, my only child, never give me such a shock again. Promise me, you will never run away on a horse again."

Without waiting for her promise, he turned to Paul, who stood by, touched by the scene.

"My young friend, it is you perhaps who saved my child. I hasten to thank you."

"Yes, papa, Monsieur Beauvais—he's Raoul

Beauvais' son—saved my life. Dante ran away with me, and Monsieur Paul rode swiftly by my side and lifted me off on to his beautiful horse. A real romantic rescue, papa!"

"We thank you again," said both parents in one voice, extending their hands.

"Come, we shall go into the house," said the father. "And you are Raoul Beauvais' son?—Your father and I are friends."

Paul was kindly received in the great chateau of the De Robincourts. His hosts detained him until after the mid-day meal, and he was shown through the building; the gallery, the library, and made feel welcomed. Monsieur de Robincourt took delight in pointing out where a German shell had plowed through the outer walls, and tearing its way into the gallery, pinned the large painting of the great grandfather to the thick, inner wall of solid masonry, and there stuck half-buried and unexploded.

"That was as far as it could go," said Pierre de Robincourt proudly. "When it struck my grand-sire, it was too much. I shall never remove it—it is a testimony that shall continue in this home."

When Paul finally managed to excuse himself to return home, he said:

"Monsieur de Robincourt, I wish to speak with you privately."

"Certainly, my son," the man said, assuming a quizzical expression as he led the way into the library.

"Paul, my son, speak—has your father sent a message?"

"No," said Paul, hesitating before proceeding further. "I wish to make a request. I want your consent for your daughter, Mademoiselle Yvonne, to be my sweetheart."

A great change overcast the severe man's countenance, but, in spite of himself, he smiled.

"She is very young, my son—and you are young. I shall advise with your father and give you my reply when you are older."

The polite finality in De Robincourt's voice told Paul that the interview was ended, and he bowed low and said:

"I thank you, sir. I shall endeavor to be worthy of your consideration when the proper time has arrived."

A servant stood at the marble entrance, holding Louis XIV, now freshly groomed and ready for the gallop home. Paul bid them adieu, but Yvonne could not be found. At last they observed her running towards the horse, carrying several large, white roses.

"What will Yvonne do next?" exclaimed the mother, folding her hands in mock despair.

But they followed out to the gate, laughing as they watched Yvonne fasten three roses in Louis' foretop. The fourth one, the prettiest of all, she gave to Paul.

The young man sprang into his saddle, waved his

hat, and gave his horse the word to go. In a minute more he had disappeared in the peaceful bosom of the forest.

When he came in sight of the Château Morestier, the chauffeur was rolling out the automobile. Paul dismounted quickly, and at once got in the car to go after Dr. Joumonville.

"Tell mother I shall be back at five to get her to ride with me. She and I can then take with us Father Pelletier."

The servant hastened to deliver the message before leading Louis XIV to his stall.

Paul preferred to drive the car himself. He put his hand to the wheel, and silently the long machine glided down the hill, and, with a few puffs of the engine, mounted over the high bridge. A wasted, wizened old man on crutches waited at his gate, certain that he would not be disappointed. On the minute by St. Joseph's clock, Paul placed Dr. Joumonville by him on the seat, and began threading the little crooked streets of Ste. Genevieve, for that was the kind of ride the old Doctor liked best, since he was no longer able to go about and see the one-time village—now grown into a prosperous manufacturing town. But the village part was the same, and would always be, and the few gray-haired people who remained from the ante-bellum days preferred it to the stylish, modern additions on the hillsides.

The Doctor was feeling better than usual, and

asked to stay and ride with Father Pelletier and Madame Beauvais. The same routes were taken again by the four friends, and the same bowings and greetings came to Paul everywhere they went. Some said: "How kind of him to take the old people for a ride!" Others came to the side of the car to speak to the aged priest and the Doctor. Madame Beauvais also received her share of good greetings. She was as popular as ever with the village people.

That night when the stars shone and the fireflies hovered over the Oise, Paul and his mother clambered to the top of the Château, and he led her to the wide stone coping that served as a seat. He was not ashamed to tell her all that had transpired in the Robincourt Forest.

And again Hermance understood.

CHAPTER XV

THE FIRST CHALLENGE

JEALOUSY is the most treacherous of human passions. It makes men blind to good in others; it distorts and demonizes its victims. It ruins homes and inspires murders.

"Jealousy is the apprehension of superiority."—*Shenstone*.

Raoul Beauvais, the fine young man of the old days, the brave soldier, the good husband, became hopelessly entangled in the meshes of jealousy. It destroyed his reason where Paul was concerned. It swept him on and on, day by day, until he hated Paul. With great difficulty, the foster-father restrained himself sufficiently to be coldly polite and courteous.

But Paul noted his manner and avoided coming in contact with him as much as possible. It was discouraging. Paul had arrived at a period when youth regards life as a panorama of glorious achievements only awaiting his advance amid flare of trumpets. To be confronted at such a heyday-time with opposition from the father in the home, presents a battle front quite formidable to most young men. Sooner or later, the illusion may be unmasked, but it were better if the father should be the last man to volunteer as the villain.

Jealousy had placed green goggles on Raoul Beauvais, and he saw in Paul the Jacob of Israel, scheming and waiting to deprive Alfred and Victor of their birthrights—and he believed Hermance would be the Rebecca to support Paul in his silly attempts to ride over the heads of his brothers.

Thus insanely arrayed against Paul, the father determined to put Alfred forward as the heir and strong arm of the family. Victor had taken to music. It was likely that his tastes would all be centered in that art—then a share of the fortune would suffice. The daughters would be wedded in due course, leaving the way clear and wide to his favored son. Therefore, he hedged about Alfred, while planning for the future, every comfort and advantage that could insure towards making him a gentleman or a great man of business. Alfred was ignorant of his father's ambitious plottings.

With this idea fully developed, Mr. Beauvais lost no time in declaring himself. One evening, shortly after the incident in the Robincourt Forest, which Hermance had counselled Paul to keep to himself for the present, the master of the Château Morestier requested the attendance of his wife and Alfred in the library. Beauvais had selected that particular evening because he knew all the children were invited to a ball at the residence of Madame Villiers,—the first of a series of functions to be given for the entertainment of young girls and boys of the best families. He would detain Alfred a little while,

after which he could join his brothers and sisters.

"Have the children gone?" asked Beauvais rather brusquely when his wife and Alfred entered.

"Yes," replied Hermance, "Paul and Victor have gone with the girls."

"I shall not keep you long, Alfred," said the father in a reassuring voice which sounded strange to the mother.

After a little hesitation, he continued, and, while speaking, kept a watchful eye on Madame Beauvais.

"I wish to make known to you my anxiety for the future of our family, and to unfold for your consideration certain conclusions I have reached after most careful reflection. I know you will meet my views, and accept them as the best solution of the problem."

Madame Beauvais felt a lump begin to rise in her throat.

"Hermance, you are aware, no doubt, that our boys have different talents. Paul will probably become a professional man—a lawyer or a politician. He seems inclined to leadership, and I assume some such calling would suit him immensely, and he may do well, if forwardness and brazenness count for anything. Victor will be a musician. A portion of our fortune to each of these two boys, and to our daughters, will end our responsibility in that direction. It is probable Paul would sanction all I am saying."

This last remark was tacked on to appease the

mother, who began to show indications of opposition.

"Alfred," he continued, turning to the boy, "you have been doing considerable painting. Well, that's all right in a way—pleasant pastime—but, of course, you intend it as a hobby. I'm sure you are cut out for sterner work.

"At all events, I have selected you as the heir to the bulk of my fortune, and the representative of our family. It will devolve upon you to take my place in the great business I have helped to build. Most of my money and property will go to you. I have mentioned portions will be given to the other children. This is just, and I intend also that they shall be set out for themselves, so you will have unhampered sway in the large remainder. You will be regarded henceforth as the important branch of the family, the one who shall command obeisance from the others. If your mother concurs, and I know she will, the Château Morestier will become yours. To you and through you, my son, I look for the perpetuation of the name of Beauvais. You will also advance the family's prestige.

"You are very young to be called upon to prepare for the leadership of the family, but if you know my decisions and your responsibility, you will work with greater zeal.

"Of late, it has occurred to me that you permit Paul to outdistance you to a great extent. You must hold your own, and be his equal—or peer. In

college do not take a back seat. On all occasions, come out and display yourself to advantage."

"Don't you think, dear," said Madame Beauvais, interrupting, "that you and I had better talk about these things and lay them before Alfred when he is older?"

"No; I insist now is the time," M. Beauvais said with emphasis. "Alfred must do what I am telling him, and when he knows what I want, he will be able to comply. If we wait until he's older, the opportunity may have slipped by him." There was also a hint of impatience in his tones.

"But, father, do you think it's entirely fair to my brothers—to Paul especially? He's ever so much more capable than I."

"Now, stop right there! When you admit such an absurdity, you are defeated in your race. Stop, I say! I must not hear it from you again. It's that attitude on your part which grieves me—and your mother, I trust;—that general acceptance that Paul 'is ever so much more capable' than you! I say he is not! You must not be a weakling. You are a Beauvais. He is not—not—not your equal, if you—if you will make it so!"

Mother and son sat helpless under this seemingly unwarranted tirade. It was clear M. Beauvais was unduly excited.

"One other subject I must mention, and then you may go, Alfred. This concerns you personally, my son, but it is, nevertheless, a matter of much import

to your mother and me, as well. In your success or failure in this last, but most vital step, are involved our hopes and ambitions. I refer to your marriage. You are young, too young, to have serious thoughts of that which now seems far removed, but I may not pass this opportune moment without indicating to you my preference. You can then mould your life to suit my ideas, which will be yours, if you are a dutiful son.

"My fortune is now considerable, and it is increasing rapidly each year. However, the greater the personal fortune of a man, the greater becomes his power. I want you to have as much of this world's wealth as all of us can get together for you.

"Now, Pierre de Robincourt and I are friends. I——"

A smothered exclamation emanated from Hermance, and she covered her face with her hands.

"What ails you, Madame Beauvais?" asked the husband with heat.

"I have something to say to you, Raoul, before you discuss that further."

"You can have your say to me later. I'm keeping my son from an important social engagement to hear my wishes, and you and I can always go into details when he is gone."

Beauvais lowered the key of his voice somewhat in uttering the last few words, so as to suggest that he was not angry—only in earnest.

"As I was saying, De Robincourt and I are

friends. His father and mine were friends and chums in the army of 1870. The present De Robincourt wealth is at least five times as great as mine. Now he has an only child, a beautiful daughter of about your age, Alfred, and it is my purpose to make her your wife. I am sure you will prefer her above all others when the time comes."

"But, father."

"Don't interrupt. Let me finish.

"You and I, my son, must not let this prize escape us. Yvonne de Robincourt will be the most attractive heiress in France in a few years, and if we can win her for you, Alfred, you will be the most envied man in the country. I can prepare the way for you. M. de Robincourt expects me to go with him next week to spend a few days on the Lakes of the Four Cantons in Switzerland, and I shall suggest the arrangement with him in a tentative way, and ascertain his views. I'm certain of his approval, but there is nothing like being in advance with everything. I must hook this fish for you against your coming into mature manhood."

Alfred looked foolish, and moved uneasily in his chair. His hands and feet seemed very much in the way.

"I have sketched the canvas for you. If you have imagination, if you have gift, if you would be a great man, an artist after my own heart, fill in the colors—make the work your masterpiece in life. The matter is now in your hands."

The lad was dismissed, after being cautioned to maintain sealed lips about everything that had been said, or might come up from time to time. He hurried off to the ball to join his brothers and sisters, with his mind gorged with ideas which were distasteful, and with responsibility heaped upon him before he was wise enough to pick and choose for himself.

"My dear Hermance," said Raoul repentently, "I must apologize for my abrupt speech to you. I have never been guilty of such a thing before, and hope another occasion shall never arise when I shall be compelled to be firm with you. You shall forgive me? You cannot see as I see. You are a woman. Sentimental considerations are always uppermost in your heart, and it is impossible for you to look after the material welfare of our children. I must do it. If you interrupt me, at the moment I cannot avoid showing impatience."

"My dear Raoul, you have spoken wisely, in main, although some of your wishes are not in accordance with my way of thinking. You possess the power to have things to your order, and I shall not argue with you. It would mar the sweetness of life we have heretofore lived. There is one thing, however, above the others you mentioned, that I wish to discuss with you. I refer to the De Robincourt proposal."

"Very well."

"I have not had an opportunity before to-night

to speak to you, as you know—because my information has only come to me this week.”

“What information?” asked Beauvais, looking up quickly.

“Are you ready to hear me now? I am quite prepared to lay before you my ideas and plans.”

“All right; I shall be ready in a few minutes. I want to read my private letters. You may remain until I have finished, if you like.”

Madame Beauvais seated herself at the table, and began to thumb a magazine. She knew very well there was a letter from M. Pierre de Robincourt on the plate, and it was just possible it might contain information likely to cause unpleasantness in the Château Morestier. Therefore, she waited to see what would be the effect of the message.

“Oho! here’s a letter now from De Robincourt. He’s getting anxious to be going off to Switzerland. Well, I can’t go until next week—business is too pressing.”

Hermance trembled slightly as he tore open the envelope.

There was no mistake. She saw the color slowly mount to his temples.

“And you knew this, Madame!” he snapped.

Hermance was so surprised that she sprang up as if there had been an explosion.

“Sir, I know not to what you refer,” she replied with dignity.

“Read this,” he said, throwing her the letter.

Hermance sat down, calmly smoothed out the crumpled sheet, and read:

"My dear Friend:

"This letter is the outcome of an incident of recent occurrence, and it is with very great pleasure that I address you and send my greetings.

"By the will of Providence, your son, Paul, saved the life of my young daughter, Yvonne, in an exciting runaway in my forest. The same day he and she formed a liking for one another, and he has presented his compliments to me, asking that I agree to the relationship of sweethearts between him and Yvonne.

"My child is too tender in years for entertaining anything so serious, but your son has made a deep and lasting impression on me and my wife, as well as Yvonne, and I readily give my consent to whatever guarded course you and I may settle for our children to pursue.

"You will honor me by accepting my kind regards, in which Madame de Robincourt's would be included. We express our esteem for you and Madame Beauvais, and await your pleasure.

"Your friend,

"PIERRE DE ROBIN COURT."

"To

M. Raoul Beauvais,
Château Morestier."

As she read, Hermance could feel, without looking at her husband, the anger which shook his very being, and she planned what she would say as she was nearing the close of the letter.

"Yes, Raoul, I have known this. It is the infor-

mation I would have conveyed to you before you spoke to Alfred. It is one of the inevitable things in life, and——”

“Inevitable! Yes! the inevitable. Madame, Paul planned it in advance. It is just like Paul. He is always miles ahead of anybody else! Madame, it’s not right that my children should be supplanted by this upstart!”

“Raoul!”

“An incident!—an exciting runaway! Paul planned the life-saving months before.”

“That’s impossible, Raoul,” Hermance said through her tears. Then she told him briefly how it had happened. Raoul paced the floor like a tiger while she detailed the story related to her by Paul.

“Can you expect me to believe this?” he asked derisively. “Is not Paul capable——”

“Shame on you, man! Are you suggesting that De Robincourt’s daughter would be a party to such deception—even though Paul were guilty? You know better.”

This was bringing them very near their first quarrel. Hermance saw it, and immediately left the room.

M. Beauvais realized his mistake—but was still in no frame of mind to make amends. However, he ran after Hermance, and tenderly led her back into the library.

“I know the day has come, Hermance. You have warned me recently. You warned me when I came

back after the war. I acknowledge it. I can no more help it than I could turn stone into gold. Try to bear with me. One thing let us agree on—YOU AND I MUST NOT QUARREL. I declare myself to you now. I will put Alfred higher than Paul, if it is in my power. The promise I made you in the beginning was that I would keep your secret and his secret. This I will keep sacred to the end. Further than that I did not promise. I have treated Paul as I would my own son. He has now developed characteristics of the race of people my ancestors have fought and I have fought, and you cannot expect me to sit by and permit him to prevail."

"I see you will oppose my boy. You have now declared your policy, and, at the same time, express the wish that you and I don't quarrel. Raoul, my dear, I accept that. On the other hand, in this enlightened age, I have a right to my opinions, and have a right, under the laws of our Republic, to oppose even the husband I love—therefore, I also declare my policy in this matter of preference."

"Which is——?"

"I WILL FIGHT FOR PAUL AND HIS RIGHTS TO THE BITTER END, and yet remain faithful and fair to my other children."

"That appears most inconsistent," Beauvais said.

"I could have made the same comment on your policy. You are a French gentleman. I appeal to your honor to be fair."

Hermance's face was flushed; her eyes burned with a new fire, and she stood before her husband his equal in every talent—his superior in many.

But Raoul Beauvais was small in nothing. His jealousy had pushed him to extremes, and would push him further—but the wife of his choice had her rights, and he acknowledged them then and there.

"I have pledged myself, Hermance, to respect your feelings, and to fight honorably for my boys. If Paul defeats me in the end—then it must be."

This was a strange compact between husband and wife, but it could not be avoided under the circumstances. It was perhaps even stranger that they should make any agreement at all. However, since they did agree, it was best that they championed their claimants without hazarding domestic peace of a quarter of a century's duration.

"You will not interfere with my answer to this letter?" Raoul asked suspiciously.

"You are starting wrong, Raoul," she said smiling. "If you are to fight me, and I fight you, we shall do so with the kindest of feelings for each other. Everything is fair in war. That's your letter. You do not need to show me your reply. I am not going to show you my reply, you may depend upon that."

The wits of the man were stalled. He had not counted on having Hermance opposed to him in that mood. He thought she might cry and give in—he

had thrown out the life line to her, and she had seized it and promised to be a most formidable antagonist.

"All right," Raoul said with a resignation that amused Hermance. She understood how he felt about Paul, and could not find it in her heart to blame him for but one thing—he was not broad enough in mind and heart to appreciate real merit in the young man.

The next morning, before going to the office, M. Beauvais motioned to Paul to follow into the garden. He realized Paul had an able ally, but finality must be put on matters as they arose. As the head of the family he would exercise his rights first—if he could—and do so in such definite terms that there could be no mistaking what he meant.

Paul was clever enough to sense something unusual was about to happen, and steadied his nerves to receive the shock.

"Paul," M. Beauvais began in a kind, but steely voice, "I have a letter from M. Pierre de Robincourt."

They had withdrawn to a secluded nook of the garden where they were quite alone. Paul stood in front of Beauvais, calmly casting an unflinching gaze in his foster-father's eyes.

"Yes, sir, M. de Robincourt promised me he would communicate with you."

"Have you learned the lesson of knowing what I mean when I give my answer?"

"Yes, father; you mean exactly what you say."

"I see you value my words. I forbid you to pay further attentions to Yvonne de Robincourt."

A cold wave rushed over Paul's body. He did not open his mouth, move a muscle, or bat an eye. He held M. Beauvais' eyes charmed by the silent defiance that said:

"Sir, in this matter my pleasure alone is my will!"

For a full minute, the young man and the middle-aged man stared at each other. No cross word was spoken, but the young man, in that brief moment, flung out his first challenge.

M. Beauvais left Paul standing there, and went to his office. All day, the boy's look kept coming back to him. It was that cool, calculating dare of a man who does not know fear. The look, as he remembered it, assumed a personality that annoyed him. Where had he seen that glint before? He remembered the stare of stolid multitudes. Ah, yes!—it was German. He recalled the look the German soldier gave him that night in the Battle of the Rivers, when they dropped to the bottom of the trench, and the flickering candle showed him what manner of man he had to fight.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LORD OF THE VINEYARD

JACOB LEDERFRANK never ceased to wonder at the unstinted liberality of Count von Essenhandel. If ever mortal man deserved praise for doing all in his power to repair a wrong with material substance, the palm would have been merited by the nobleman—had there not been the ulterior motive of revenge, and the selfish desire to benefit his own son. From the moment the able and conscientious Hebrew received his commission to go to Ste. Genevieve and seek out Raoul Beauvais, the hand of gold had held firmly to its purpose. Every need was met; no demand was quibbled at or questioned. More than once, Lederfrank interposed objections, but failed to get a hearing. The stereotyped reply was:

“I have confidence in your ability and honesty. Some day I shall review your work and require an accounting.”

In the course of years, the German's wisdom was fully demonstrated and justified. He had chosen Lederfrank as a master of business. Not only did the injured Frenchman pay back out of profits derived from the industry all advancements to him, but accumulated enormous wealth besides. The Count received the total of his original outlay, in dividends, and a fair profit in addition, even after first giving

Lederfrank fifty per cent. of the gross dividends on sixty per cent. of the capital stock. Of course, Lederfrank had profited more than any of them, except that he did not own a share of stock in the concern. Over and above all this, Beauvais owned forty per cent. of the share capital, and Lederfrank carried in his name, for Count von Essenhendel, sixty per cent. A review of these records would convince anyone that the Lord of the Vineyard had been far-sighted in his charity—the wine presses had produced abundantly, and still continued to pour forth streams of plenty for all. A day of reckoning could have terrors for none—for neither the just nor the unjust stewards.

From the beginning, the Jew kept faith with the benefactor, and was, at the same time, a true friend of Beauvais. Although obliged to conceal from his partner the source of financial support, in no instance did he harm the beneficiary. He might have confessed his duplicity to Beauvais without fear of reproach. With unerring fidelity he reported regularly to the Count everything that transpired; sent to the Rhine detailed information about Paul—his photographs, his school records, his boyish sayings and doings, and especially Beauvais' attitude towards the child from year to year. Quietly and doggedly he was pushing the business to the phenomenal success which satisfied the Count's conception of repentance.

Having clearly in mind the intention of Von

Essenhendel to establish Paul in authority in the firm of Lederfrank, Beauvais & Co.—the firm name had been changed in later years—the Count's efficient representative did not fail to communicate to his principal Beauvais' jealousy of Paul. A summons came immediately for his attendance at the castle for a conference.

Upon arriving, Lederfrank was received with the usual elaborate hospitality of the Count's household. The seven sons vied with their parents in extending the most delightful welcome in their power. To them, Jacob Lederfrank was a marvelous man. Out of a mass of hurry-scurry, cut-throat commercial pirates, he had come to handle millions. With these millions, he produced other millions, and never yet had Count von Essenhendel, or anyone for him, set foot on the premises in Ste. Genevieve, notwithstanding the long-threatened accounting. Besides, Lederfrank did not have a sou invested in the company. Such a man was deserving of the fullest appreciation by every member of the German family.

The second morning after his arrival, Jacob Lederfrank met his silent partner, Count von Essenhendel, and Dr. Rudolph Badenheim in the carved oak study of the ancient castle. Badenheim was a legal advisor of the Count, and the conservator of the multitudes of investments of the Von Essenhendel estate.

"It is so, then," began the Count, putting the tips

of his fingers together in conical shape, "that your associate evinces an inclination to suppress worthy German traits in my son?"

"That's the attitude," admitted Lederfrank with feeling, for Beauvais' bitterness had irritated and hurt the Jew.

"H'm. It is also true, I believe, that out of the profits of this great business, built up with my capital, Beauvais has returned in full all advancements made to him, and, further, has laid aside a comfortable fortune?"

"That is true."

"You are a millionaire, too, Lederfrank," said the Count, winking. "You have well earned your share," he hastened to add.

"If I had not taken care of my own, I should not have been capable of serving you," was Lederfrank's modest reply.

"The finest piece of charitable work I have ever seen carried out!" commented the lawyer.

"Very good!" admitted the Count, shaking like a jelly-fish, as he chuckled—for the head of the great Teutonic family was exceedingly fat. "I now feel," he continued, "I have fully discharged the obligation I felt buckled upon me more than twenty years ago. I owe M. Beauvais and his wife nothing. You tell me that Madame is loyal to the boy; loves him more than the other children. I am much pleased. But I am disappointed in M. Beauvais. He made a convert of me to the nobleness in French

character that night we fought hand to hand—now he becomes mean. I do not like it.”

“There is the old prejudice, Count,” volunteered the lawyer.

“Ah, but he has no leg on which to stand. He accepted the child, and he is a youth of fine character, and is promising, wholly undeserving of such treatment.”

“It is the fact, of course, that he is superior to Beauvais’ boys——”

“I know, Lederfrank, there’s something in that, but the idea of a man’s being so small and narrow that he cannot appreciate superiority in even an enemy, I cannot reconcile it with the Raoul Beauvais I knew in the trench.”

There was silence for a few seconds, and then the Count proceeded deliberately :

“But I shall bring him to account. I shall make him recognize the ability in Paul. The jealousy in him shall dribble out of him, or be torn out in bulk at my pleasure. We shall see if he is a true gentleman, temporarily crazed by discovering that his own sons are not marvels, or whether he is unworthy even to cast before swine. I shall superintend the job. If I have been liberal in repentance, I shall be zealous in making Beauvais appreciate. Of one thing I am certain. I SHALL PUT MY SON, PAUL, IN FULL AUTHORITY AND OWNERSHIP OF THE STE. GENEVIEVE BUSINESS.”

A hush again reigned in the room. Lederfrank and Dr. Badenheim knew the Count's word was as unrecallable as a rifle bullet after it had been fired. They waited to hear what would follow.

"Mr. Lederfrank, you have brought with you the original contract with Raoul Beauvais?"

"Here it is."

"Is this agreement still valid, Doctor?"

Dr. Badenheim had drawn the agreement years before, and glanced over it to refresh his memory.

"It is valid, Count, and a wonderful document of your dictation at the time."

"So! I shall see. Ah, yes! I remember the trap I set at the time. This contract provides that Raoul Beauvais can sell only to Jacob Lederfrank, or his nominee, the shares purchased under this document. The price is fixed at par—I believe this is correct. So it is. It also provides how that occasion of purchase—or sale by Beauvais—may arise. 'In case the said Raoul Beauvais shall, at any time, refuse to agree to improvements, extensions, purchases of additional properties, equipments, franchises, rights, and concessions; or shall refuse to acquiesce in the business policy of the said Jacob Lederfrank, etc.' All the rest of it is here, too—more than we need. My plan, gentlemen, is to force Beauvais to sell to Lederfrank."

"That may be very difficult," said Lederfrank. "Also, it would have to be free from any wrong, or I would not attempt it."

"You're right, Jacob. It does not necessitate wrong-doing. He is proving to be the unjust steward. I shall call him to account. Under his own hand, at the time the talents were loaned him, he prescribed the manner in which they might be required again. He loses nothing. He is rich off of the increase. On top of that, I shall pay him par, in cash, for his shares. I call that generous punishment."

"That is the generosity, Count, but not the punishment. The punishment comes in when you make over these same shares and your shares, as well, as the sole property of your son, Paul!"

The Count shook in silent, gratifying laughter.

"But it will be difficult, I repeat, to get him to comply with his agreement. The fertilizer business is so enormous."

"The devil!" exclaimed the shrewd Count, "make him sell! You have built the business. Now you come back to me and plead difficulties!"

"I have not built the business alone. Raoul Beauvais is as able as I am—he has a lot of bulldog in him, too, and I tell you we shall have to measure the cloth carefully before we cut it."

"Yes and yes and yes! But start in now to manipulate the business, so the reorganization will be imperative. You tell me, and my brother-in-law writes me, that Paul is now leading his classes at Oxford, in England, where he has gone from the universities in France. In one or two years he will

be home, ready to assume responsibilities. Plan in concert with me. The moment you reported to me Beauvais had turned the yellow leaf in his life, I began to plan. PAUL SHALL BE A GERMAN! I intend he shall wed a German girl—and inform you now, that I have arranged for my choice to be thrown in his society. He is now being entertained in the home of her father, who has established his residence in Oxford, at my suggestion. BE THOROUGH! is my motto, and is the motto of every German. That is why the world cannot compete successfully with the Fatherland. Damn it! Lederfrank, back to your guns! Bring about that reorganization!"

Dr. Badenheim laughed until he was red in the face.

"The Jew is the best business partner in the world," said the Doctor, "but business without manipulation is no good. The Jew is brains to the business; the German is the blood that maintains life and distribution—and fetching! The brain is serene and secure in its casement; the blood goes out and comes in, and, where it fails to permeate, when it ceases, there is death."

Jacob Lederfrank caught the fire from his chief, and promised to carry out the undertaking.

"Dr. Badenheim will assist you in working out the legal details. You may not be aware that my other investments already control the ingredient materials you use in your factories with the phos-

phate. I also have a concealed hand in the various distributing agencies, and know how to curtail your sales without your discovering how it is done. Lastly, but not least, your vast equipment of machinery is out of date. Determine at once to put in new machinery. You will then find how near I am to the factory that can supply the machinery. You see, my dear Lederfrank, you are just now learning things that you never thought it necessary for you to know, and yet they are the basis of the business you have builded. A German never goes into a business without knowing all about it, AND CONTROLLING ALL ABOUT IT. From the moment of creation—or extraction from earth, to the return to earth of your fertilizer, every particle, every ingredient, is mine. The ways and means of handling the products are mine. In six months' time I could break down your business, and you would never know how it was accomplished."

A week later, in the factory office, at Ste. Genevieve, the usual business conference was in progress. The practice had been established to commit to writing whatever conclusions were reached in these daily conferences, and the records were kept in a book, prepared for the purpose, duly dated and signed by both men. On the afternoon in question, Lederfrank proposed an extension of operations to North and South America, on a larger scale than had ever been attempted in Europe. It was considered good business policy, and met with approval.

Lederfrank wrote the five-line laconic record, and he and Beauvais signed it.

Two months later, when through the Count's ways of "ins and outs" huge contracts had been signed in the United States with the Union Fertilizer Company, and another engagement entered into in Buenos Aires, Lederfrank had no difficulty in getting Beauvais to agree to replacement of machinery, if necessary, to carry out the contracts. Then in due course, both men discovered that the American contracts had been taken on very close margin—they had honestly made a miscalculation in some way, though Lederfrank suspected Count von Essenhendel. In fact, the margin of profit was so close that Beauvais feared to undertake deliveries, after rebuilding the factories. Disaster stared them in the face.

"Jacob," said Beauvais, greatly concerned, "how did we overlook these items? How did we make mistakes on freights? True, we acted on our salesmen's advices, but you and I checked these items—in fact, all items. We both went and secured the information, and it was all correct then. I cannot understand it."

Lederfrank had been honest, and proposed to be throughout. He had been careful in making the prices.

"Well, Raoul, it's done. There is a chance we may break even on those contracts, except, perhaps, the items of machinery and initial outlay—I mean

we may not lose on the actual manufacture of the products."

"Yes; but this machinery will bankrupt us!"

"Hardly so bad as that! Our company is in good credit, and, while we do not yet know what this machinery is going to cost, I cannot see bankruptcy."

"It's not the way we've been doing business in the past."

"No."

"How did we ever come to think of this American business?"

"It came up in the regular course of our conferences."

"Don't understand me, Jacob, to be blaming you. We have always made it a rule to act in concert, and, after anything is done and signed, never to question who mentioned it first—and especially never to repudiate what we did. That's my policy still, but it does look to me as though we have made a blunder which may wreck us."

"What will you do with it?" asked Lederfrank.

"I can't say. Shall we wait to see the scale of prices this spring? By that time our machinery will be installed."

The first wedge was in, and months were ahead for contemplation.

CHAPTER XVII

BEFORE THE START

PAUL BEAUVAIS was just completing his courses at Oxford—would be among the graduates in the summer following. He had come alone to England. Patient work in French Universities put him far in advance of his brothers, who were devoting much time to the arts they liked best—painting and music.

Alfred was a fine young man, and already his paintings had attracted some attention in Paris. Victor played the violin. They called him the "Dandy" Beauvais. The younger brothers had never been in England, and Paul expected them on the early train, arriving in Oxford. His studies forbade him the pleasure of meeting them at Folkestone.

A gray, January morning lay like a soiled blanket over the quaint college town of Oxford. The bare-limbed trees in the University grounds were dripping with water, and yet it did not rain—the atmosphere was so saturated with moisture that everything wept from depression. Paul glanced up from the thesis he was writing, and saw the erect figure of Alfred coming along the Broad Walk. "Oho! he is hours ahead of time—and alone."

Seizing his hat he met Alfred before he got to the door.

"Why, Al! I didn't expect you before twelve."

"Oh, the boat and train were too slow for me—I came over in the Royal Mail airliner, *SWAN*. Victor is on the boat—girls along, you know."

"You're looking fit."

"My English is bad, you must remember—what is fit?"

Paul smiled. "That's strictly English—in this case it means, I find you looking well."

"This oozy climate seems to agree with you," said Alfred, contemplating the pall without.

"It doesn't seem to trouble me any to keep up to the mark."

"When have you heard from mother, Paul?"

"Had a letter this morning—it was written this morning, too. It came over on the Northern France, *EAGLE*."

"It's almost like living in a number of places at the same time nowadays."

"Yes; since being here in Oxford, I have had letters from you in three hours after you wrote them."

"Doing good work here as usual?"

"Fair, I suppose. Englishmen are slow but sure, and I worry them some by getting on faster than they like."

"Doing anything else except study?"

"Oh, lots of things. I have lectured several times

in London recently, and am expected to speak there next Friday night, at Queen's Hall, on the International Republic."

"My, you're still at that. Why, since the war scare which blew over four years ago, the theme has become stale," Alfred said, offering Paul a cigar.

"Yes; I know the ardor fell off some—of course, with the League of Nations, which has been more or less existent since the famous Woodrow Wilson peace, the question could not be dropped entirely. There has been a sort of international combination to prevent war. However, now there is a strong society organized in London, under the leadership of several prominent men, with the object in view of awakening public interest and support. A series of addresses are to be delivered in Queen's Hall during the winter. The same thing is being done in larger cities in the United States, Germany, and France."

"Yes; I went to one of these 'open meetings' in Paris, three weeks ago," said Alfred, "but it was poorly attended, and the speaker—half of us fell asleep."

"It is unfortunate, I know. While at the time of the Woodrow Wilson peace all the world clamored for a union of nations, prejudices prevented a proper carrying out of the idea. There has always been that question of nations' thirst for power. They have never really wanted a League of Nations, but

have rather clung to the Balance of Power Idea. International jealousy always barred reforms.

"I'm certain, though, it is different today. It is different in London. The public is interested already. My address is the third. The other two were delivered by men of international standing, and the hall was filled with representative citizens."

"What is your subject?"

"'The International Constitution.' A little in advance, perhaps, but I believe to make a movement like this go, is to launch into it at once. If you can arouse comment, or even opposition, you have really started something. High-flown orations on peace and brotherly love may interest for a time, but people want to know how it is proposed to do a thing, before giving it support."

"What particular theory do you advance?"

"Wait until you hear me. You and Victor will go?"

"Yes; I'll go—can't answer for Victor. He's so taken up with music. I believe he has several engagements booked to play in private."

After a pause, Alfred asked, "Anything else going on?"

"Plenty of receptions and the like. There's to be quite a gala affair tomorrow evening at Baron von Kielstadt's home; but this is a German family, of course. The son is in Christ College."

"Your first invitation, is it?"

"Oh, no; I've been several times to dinner—charming people, and very learned.

"Baron von Kielstadt is much interested in my International Republic views. He and I have had a number of long talks on the subject.

"Yes; and I have learned to speak German from associating with the family. My study of German in France, of course, prepared me to pick up fluent speaking easily, and the daughter—by the way a wonderful young lady—has taken great care in assisting me. I believe I shall soon be able to deliver an address in the language."

Alfred listened, and then said:

"Father would probably have something to say about your speaking German."

"No; I can't think of father as being narrow. He has never spoken against the Germans to me."

"I heard him on one occasion," cautioned Alfred, "and I never want to hear him again."

"Anyway, you and Victor are invited with me for to-morrow night. You will go and see for yourselves. I tell you they are popular among the students here. I have also been in their London house—it's a center for learned society."

"All right, General," said Alfred, "you always managed to get us into the right places in Paris, and we can certainly trust you over here. I have come to do some painting at the National Gallery, in London; Victor will learn the language and study some, also, or spend his time as he likes. At

all events, if you can guide us into the best families, it will be pleasant for us."

"There are many fine English families here, and in London, with whom I am acquainted. My studious habits have not prevented my going about a great deal, and, as always, I have made many friends. You know I like to know people—must have friends to get on and be happy. I've met some excellent country folk, too, and while you are in England, I shall arrange for you to see all that you can."

Alfred entertained his brother for an hour with accounts of his paintings. That seemed to be the one thing on his mind, and Paul was rather pleased to see he had caught the hunger of the artist, which would doubtless carry him to success. Among other things which interested Paul, was to see if Alfred thought of mentioning a portrait of a young lady, only recently completed. Finally, Alfred said:

"I must tell you, I have just completed my first order for a portrait. Father secured for me an order to paint Mademoiselle Yvonne de Robincourt's portrait. Paul, but she is beautiful! I really do not think I did her justice in oils, but her family praised my work. Oh! but they have a grand palace beyond the Forest. I wish you could see the interior, once."

"I have been all through the old mansion," said Paul, with as little interest as possible, for his

mother had advised him not to let Alfred know of his attachment for Yvonne; and if Alfred mentioned the matter, or the De Robincourts in any way, she advised it would be much wiser to show as little concern as consistent, without going to extremes.

"You've been there! Where on earth, Paul, have you not been? Well, it's fine, and I know you will admit it."

"Yes; it is the equal of any of the old places still existing in France."

"Now, old De Robincourt, he's a caution. He came in twice while Mademoiselle Yvonne was sitting for her portrait, and each time I wanted to throw something at him. He's the gruffest mortal I have ever met on French soil. He looked at me as if he wanted to spank me."

"You say they were pleased with the painting?"

"Oh, yes. In the end, the old chap was quite delighted with it. He warmed up a bit, and said nice things about my future in art."

"Have you painted any landscapes in that part?"

"Let me finish about the De Robincourt order. A few days after it was completed, father came to me and gave me five thousand francs, saying that M. de Robincourt would have paid more, if he had asked more.

"But you know father has queer ideas about dealings with his friends."

That was the first time any mention of family

had ever occurred between the brothers. Both parents had cautioned them—M. Beauvais his champion, and Madame Beauvais hers. Evidently, M. Beauvais thought it wise to refrain from mentioning to Alfred that Paul had already made a favorable impression, and might become his chief rival. Anyway, the relations of the brothers throughout had continued confidential on all other matters, and there was nothing strained or unnatural between them, as might have been expected under such circumstances. The fact was, brotherly affection existing between the three boys, had always been entirely strong, and they were too sensible to permit parental ambitions to interfere and mar youthful happiness.

Paul, however, knew Alfred was making desperate efforts to win Mademoiselle Yvonne. Airline mail ships were not sailing the heavens to carry only commercial letters.

Victor arrived at one o'clock. He had experienced a regulation rough passage on the English Channel, and was still pale and out of sorts.

"*Enfin!*" he said, after relating how the waves had boiled over the narrow steamer, and how the ladies and gentlemen were afflicted alike; "*est-ce suprenant que l'Angleterre n'ait jamais été envahie?*"

"No," replied Alfred, "it is not surprising that foreign armies in the past have not succeeded in invading England."

"William the Conqueror and his Normans did," said Paul.

"But they remained!" said Victor, grinning. "Doubtless they feared the return journey more than Harold's soldiers—hence the victory at Hastings."

"And your lady friends?" asked Alfred of Victor.

"Oh, they got to London—I hope. *Il m'était impossible de faire le chevalier galant!*"

The ball at Baron von Kielstadt's the following night was truly a grand affair. There was a total absence of catering to the snobbishness of former times. Great numbers had not been invited. The brightest and most popular young men of the student body were present. Several couples came down from London. The American Ambassador and his daughters, the German Ambassador, the French Ambassador and his wife, and a sprinkling of diplomats from several countries were in attendance. Just sufficient of the best English society had been selected to give the high tone of the home land.

The elaborate Elizabethan residence, temporarily occupied by the Baron, was tastefully furnished, leaving a few marks of ancient luxury, where good sense suggested they were better than the new; and the decorations for this special occasion were appropriate without a smacking of gaudiness. The ballroom, the guests' rooms, the dining

salon, were aglitter with splendor, but not overdone to the point of giving one the feeling that the house was on exhibition.

The Baron and the Baroness, dignified and stately, presided over their guests, without giving the impression of any deep-laid design to court favor; nor did they appear uneasy lest some detail might jar the delicate notions of the guests. The palatial home had been thrown open to invite friends for an evening of enjoyment.

That no thought of ends to be attained entered the minds of the hostess and her husband was absolutely true—with one exception. The trap was set to catch Paul Beauvais. Their daughter, Ellinda, had been set apart as suitable for Paul's ideal wife. Count von Essenhendel was financing the campaign. The Baron's son, Frederick, was personally interested in this scheme and worked in season and out of season at the invader's son, to hasten the accomplishment which had brought the Von Kielstadts to England.

Ellinda Von Kielstadt was the most efficient of the four plotters, and a certain startling vivaciousness and freshness made her, in most instances, irresistible in winning the attentions of men. Her subtle beauty was hypnotic. She had a wonderful figure, light golden hair, nymphlike face, clear and delightfully teasing blue eyes, highly intelligent expression, pretty hands, small feet; and she carried herself with a quick, elastic step, indicative of great

vitality and exuberance of gay spirits. A rich husband was her ambition. With her attractiveness, cleverness, education, and sparkling wit, she made an exceedingly formidable adversary in tempting romantic conquests. Before Count von Essenhen-del took her family under his wing for her sake, Ellinda had lived a hard life, pinched and restricted sometimes for bare necessities. The Count had found the Von Kielstadts in a small apartment of four rooms, in the cheap quarter of Berlin. They were poor aristocrats—a family of ancient lineage and renown,—father and mother learned and re-fined, and accustomed to the fat of the land. A chain of unfortunate financial transactions had dropped them out of the circle of their friends, and nipped the prospects of the daughter, just as she was coming into womanhood. The Count, in casting about for a wife for Paul, remembered the Baron and his family, and made certain proposals which had resulted in the opening of the establishments in London and Oxford. Ellinda entered into the attempted capture with a spirit of adventure—anything was preferable to starving without the railings of her true state. She could not think of going on the stage; she did not know how to work, but she would know how to scheme for a husband, and, while she had come with her mother and father on an expedition of conquest for money, she was already actually in love with Paul Beauvais, which fact greatly hazarded his chances of escape.

And yet Paul was ignorant and unsuspecting of the state of affairs. He led Ellinda into dinner that night, and was envied by two-thirds of the young men for having the preference. He also danced with Ellinda. But Paul liked to know what was going on, and made it his business to talk with the Ambassadors and informed men about current events, and get their opinions of the chances of success for the International Republic. He chatted and joked with the elderly ladies, and mingled so generally among the select crowd that no one could have said any young lady monopolized him. In fact, Paul Beauvais rather held himself aloof in paying too much attention to anyone. He was agreeable and companionable, but quiet and unobtrusive.

The old Baron was the formidable schemer. His learning, authoritative bearing, personal interest for his children's welfare, and the great desire to resuscitate the substance of his family, impelled him with a zeal that made him even as dangerous to Paul as his daughter's wiles. Besides, the Count had promised an orphan niece, who was rich, and a member of the Count's household, in marriage to the Baron's son, Frederick—the engagement having already been arranged with the pretty niece, and things would run smoothly, provided the union could be consummated between Ellinda and Paul.

The Baron had been told in confidence that Paul was the Count's son by a marriage that had been

broken off in the Great War, and Paul had been allowed to take the name of a French gentleman, who afterwards became the husband of the Picardian beauty. The Baron was also apprised of the fact that the Count proposed to put Paul into full ownership of the immense business in Ste. Genevieve. The bait, therefore, was worth while, and with the lifting out of want, verging on to beggary, and the promise of great and lasting benefits, the astute German might be depended upon to court Paul Beauvais to an extent difficult to resist, and the course of the hare was watched with a trained hunter's eye.

The mother had first revolted at the idea of going out to capture a husband for her daughter, but poverty is a hard taskmaster. The husband, the daughter, and the son finally prevailed. When the fine old lady saw Paul for the first time, she was quite satisfied. "Ellinda," she said, "you could not choose a more excellent young man for a husband." Once in the full swing of the chase, with plenty of money flowing in from the Count, the mother became almost as capable as any of them.

Only one little incident occurred the night of the ball which could be depended upon as leading to a starting point. It was planned by Ellinda. It was not couched in a look. No word was said that carried beyond its plain dictionary meaning. There was not an accidental touch to stir an idle thought. The schemers did not attempt a sortie of any kind.

No comment was made by an observant guest. It was only an accident that happened—so it appeared! but Ellinda had deliberately planned it, and initially, at least, it worked out to her satisfaction.

Next to the last dance was on, and, for the second time during the night, Paul sat talking casually with Ellinda—she had tried to have more of these exclusive chats with him, but he seemed to be so occupied with others. She could have him then only for five minutes, for he would dance in the last set with the French Ambassador's wife. A fit of desperation had seized Ellinda within the hour, and she vowed she would do something to put Paul under an obligation to her. She was tired of his formal calls—mostly to converse with her father. He must be brought to her in some way, by some trifle of an excuse, so that an affair could have a chance of starting. Therefore, while directing his attention to the dancers whirling past them, she looped her delicate watch chain around the two sleeve buttons of his coat. The valuable watch was then drawn half out of its pocket. By a subterfuge she kept him until the music began for his set. The large number of participants in the farewell spin were already gliding rapidly over the floor. Excusing himself, Paul dashed away to secure his partner. The watch chain fastened to him, snapped off short, and the watch went rattling under the flying feet. It was crushed immediately, and kicked hither and thither without mercy.

"Oh, I am so sorry!—how could I have done it?" exclaimed Paul, returning to her at once.

"It must have caught on your coat—yes, there's a bit of the chain on your sleeve now," said Ellinda.

"Do, pray excuse my carelessness—I was late. I must have made an awkward movement. I shall certainly replace the watch and chain."

"Oh, never mind. It's really nothing at all. It was an old watch anyway—a gift from the King of Saxony."

"Only the more reason why you valued it—I shall certainly replace the damage. I'm not the King of Saxony, but I can give you a new watch."

A young man came over with the mangled time-piece at that moment, and Paul took it and put it into his pocket.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CALL TO NATIONS

REFORMS have small beginnings. Often the crying need dins in the ears of generations before definite action is taken. Then suddenly an enthusiast hurls a bomb that starts the wavelet on the still waters. Sometimes a dying beggar gasps a battle motto in a single sentence. A priest, in Rome, sees two slaves sold on the auction block, and makes an anagram on the word *Angles*, turning it into "angels," and a monk is sent to Britain to teach Christianity. And so on through the annals of history, people point to some specific act—to a man, a woman, or a baby,—and say that the great movement started then, or with the advent of this or that personality.

But quite as frequently, momentous events have their births in the minds of students. Or a student may gather the fragments of some doctrine, which have been floating about homeless for a hundred years, crystallize the principles involved, and some day exhibit his handiwork to the populace, when, lo! he kindles an inextinguishable fire. The masses catch up the rare thing of beauty, and his name is immortalized to posterity.

Paul Beauvais knew this, but when he thought of it during the preparation of his address which

he had agreed to deliver in Queen's Hall, he smiled and put the hope from him. He could not be a genius and electrify an audience. Besides, he had an old, threadbare subject to deal with—there was a little more interest in the international union idea just at that time, but he suspected it was owing to the fact that leading men had been honorary members, and they were paying perfunctory compliments for the recognition politely extended them. After they had done their duty, the spurt of popularity would die down. So far the movement had been talked about only, and the leading orators were usually ministers of churches, presidents of colleges, or students of universities. These latter workers were easily induced to do the digging and haranguing—it gave them an opportunity to air learning,—and might lead to something! Paul was frank enough to admit that he had been selected to speak, probably to save some older head the trouble of disturbing the gray matter of his brain. Nevertheless, he was sincerely enthused over the International Republic project, stale as it had become, and put his mind and heart into the address. He would fling his best at the sleepy crowd anyway—perhaps they would talk, or make wry faces at him!

Therefore, he decided upon the subject, "The Constitution of the International Republic," and actually wrote out his conception of what that document should be. At the proper place in the

address—if the people showed any inclination to hear,—he would read the “Constitution.” Why not?—what could result if no clean-cut idea were ever advanced?

London is the one place in the world where a crowd can always be collected. A few paving blocks are to be removed in the Strand, and hundreds loiter to see it done. A suffragette gesticulates three times in Trafalgar Square, and five hundred people form a semicircle about her. On Sundays, three score and ten harebrained exhorters expound weird religious creeds in Hyde Park, and thousands of men and women stand about in cold rains to be enlightened, or befuddled. The theatres are always full. Whatever the subject of the lecturer, and no matter where he speaks, an audience will be there, provided the people know about it—and the English are capital listeners.

The Universal Peace Society, London Auxiliary, graciously patronized by Lord Merriweather and Lord Summersfield, of which select society Sir Pinkerton Dudley-Smith, Speaker of the House of Commons, was the Honorable Secretary, circulated the information that the Hon. Willis Baddington, Premier of Canada, would address the next meeting on a subject of vital interest. Members and friends should show their approval of the grand purpose of the organization by attending.

Paul's name was not mentioned in the announcement card, from which he concluded that his

address had been dispensed with until speakers were difficult to procure for less important sessions.

Sir Pinkerton Dudley-Smith, in return for his appointment as Honorable Secretary, felt obliged to announce the meeting in both houses of Parliament. He paid a high tribute to the Premier of Canada, and gave such a twist to his appeal that about half of the members decided to go to Queen's Hall that night. All of the Commons and Lords had received engraved cards, making them co-workers of the society for a year, and really they had been too busy to acknowledge receipt—it was already too late to do that, and the smallest courtesy within their power was to attend once. It would not do to slight the Dominion's Premier; hence they would hear what he had to say on such a threadbare theme.

The coming of the Hon. Willis Baddington, however, had been given publicity only three or four days prior to the night of the meeting. The Peace Society's Committee on Speakers secured the fine catch in the nick of time—it meant something to be able to mention that premiers were working for the cause. Therefore, owing to the short time allowed, the filling of seats in the Hall might have been handicapped somewhat, but for an additional fillip which came at the last moment.

Posters of news-vendors, in London, that evening displayed tall headlines, reading: "LORD DAVID LLOYD GEORGE WILL PRESIDE

TO-NIGHT!" Any mention of the name of the veteran idol of England always attracted attention. *The News* and *The Star* sold by thousands. A half-page photograph of the grey-haired hero appeared, with the statement, that early in the afternoon, "Lord George, the famous War Premier of the European Struggle of 1914," had been induced to preside at the special meeting of the Universal Peace Society, at Queen's Hall, that night; the patriotic leader would appreciate his people's attendance, since the subjects of the Empire should not be slow to give approval to so worthy a cause. The speaker of the evening was eulogized in a second paragraph. Of course, the result was that Queen's Hall could not accommodate the crowd. Hundreds were turned away, for even standing room could not be found.

Oxford and Cambridge professors were especially active in the Society, and more or less managed its affairs. This was particularly true of the Oxford men—they constituted the backbone of the movement, as far as England was concerned. Oxford professors furnished most of the speakers, and they had put Paul Beauvais forward as a most able exponent to do spade work for the Society. The young man had delivered several lectures in London, at small theatres and halls, and some of these efforts had been noticed by the papers. *The Daily Telegraph*, on one occasion, was liberal enough to insert two modest paragraphs, in which

it stated: "M. Paul Beauvais's lecture last night, at Shepherd's Bush, was highly appreciated. He handled his subject well—we might say that his effort was characterized by an amazing freshness of thought." But it had never occurred to Paul to attempt to do more than "entertain" the perfunctory sessions of the Society.

Therefore, when Paul saw that special preparations were in progress for the extraordinary meeting, he supposed he was out of it—certainly, "The Constitution of the International Republic" would do for another time. However, on the morning preceding the meeting that night, Professor Thurlow came to Paul and said:

"Of course, you are prepared for to-night."

"Yes; but I shall not be required, since the Premier of Canada is to speak."

"But I understand he cannot arrive until nine o'clock, and, inasmuch as the cards and posters have stated the time of meeting as eight o'clock, it is our intention to introduce you to hold the audience for the Honorable Premier."

"All right. I have done my best, and can finish all I have to say by nine. But don't you think one of our professors should take my place? There is sure to be a good gathering of people, and—"

"No, M. Beauvais. Oxford has done much for the promulgation of this movement, and in conference this morning, the various heads of departments think the people should know what our

student body thinks. You have been selected to give expression for the college and for yourself, and you shall be given the opportunity in the waiting interval to-night."

Thus it happened that the Invader's Son, neat and trig in a new suit, sat on the platform with the coterie of notables about Lord George and the University professors from Oxford and Cambridge. Paul was full of his subject, held the precious "Constitution" in his hand ready to perform his part of the preliminary program. He knew nothing of the Lord George arrangement until he reached London about six o'clock, and was astonished to see the huge mass of people in the hall. He was rather anxious to be done with his speech, so that he might enjoy the remainder of the program.

The Speaker of the House of Commons made a brief statement that the large crowd present would doubtless be glad to recognize one of England's greatest men on the rostrum. Paul looked out over the sea of faces, and cheered with them when the white-haired statesman arose and began to speak. The young man, the invader's son, was wholly unaware of the trick Fate was beginning to play that very moment for him. While Lord George spoke in slow, measured sentences, the train bearing the Hon. Willis Baddington crashed into a goods train, and made it impossible for the Canadian Premier to arrive before ten o'clock.

But it was just as well that no one knew. Lord George never had been noted for long speeches, and after explaining that the principal orator of the evening, the Honorable Premier of the Dominion of Canada, could not be present until nine o'clock, introduced to the people M. Paul Beauvais, whom the renowned leader characterized as "one of Oxford's promising young men."

Paul felt his face and neck grow hot, but what did it matter—he might as well get on with what he had to say.

Once on his feet, his heated brain cooled while a polite clapping cheered him from the main floor and the galleries, and his nerves steadied. He began in a voice as clear as the tone of a silver bell, and it carried to the topmost seat. His first sentence gripped the listeners. His unconcern for self won for him. At the end of five minutes came rather a hearty applause. It encouraged him.

Paul then began to court his audience. With a keen eye he observed that men and women here and there were coming over to him rapidly, and with a little more word painting, the crowd would give him the inspiration necessary for him to make them understand all he wanted to say. He realized his power, and masterfully cultivated the minds and hearts before him until they were all in his hands for the hour. Then he began to deliver a great speech. Men opened their eyes wide as they gazed at the massive young figure before them,

pouring out the most stirring appeal they had ever listened to, and they permitted themselves to follow his thoughts and be convinced. For an hour and a half, Beauvais interested them, swayed them, and made converts for his cause. He paused and looked at Lord George, "Is the Honorable Premier present?" he asked.

"The Honorable Premier will not arrive yet for almost an hour, on account of unexpected delay," was the reply.

"Go on! go on!" came from all parts of the hall.

Beauvais then brought out the proposed constitution and read it so that not a syllable was lost. He closed with an oratorical climax that left his hearers wild with excitement.

Briefly, the document he read stated in the preamble that the people of the various nations proposed to form the International Republic to bring the inhabitants of earth into greater sympathy with each other, to insure lasting universal peace, to make and enforce international laws and treaties, and to secure the blessings of liberty and unhampered world commerce to posterity.

The substance of the "Constitution" may be outlined as follows:

1. The union should be formed of all the civilized nations admitted into full membership; smaller nations, or settlements, not yet attained to the standard of civilization fixed, were to be accepted as secondary members.

2. The law-making branch of the International Republic was to be composed of a Parliament, made up of a lower house, called the House of Representatives and the Senate, or Upper House. The methods of electing and appointing the representatives and senators, the apportionments, bases of representation, qualifications, salaries, proceedings to remove, steps necessary to fill vacancies, etc.; were fully set out.

3. The International Supreme Court and inferior Courts would interpret laws and treaties, and administer justice to litigant nations.

4. The enforcement of the laws and treaties were placed in the executive department of the union, at the head of which was to be an International President, elected by the joint votes of parliaments of all the nations, for a period of ten years. There were to be two vice-presidents, elected in a similar way, also for ten years; the first vice-president to possess the qualifications of the president, and it should be his duty to preside over the International Senate; the second vice-president, also possessing the presidential qualifications, should preside as Speaker of the International House of Representatives. In case of the death or removal of the President, the vice-presidents should succeed him in the order of their respective ranks.

The International President would be Commander in Chief of the Army of the International

Republic composed of a certain standing army from each nation member; and Commander of the International Navy, composed of the fleets of the nations. The armies and navies of the nation members were to be regulated as to numbers of men and ships, so that their maintenance would not be a burden to the citizens of the various nations.

5. The right to declare war was taken away from member nations, as well as the right to discuss differences or grievances arising from each other. All such matters were vested in the Senate of the International Republic, acting as an Arbitration Court. In case of rebellion, or disobedience on the part of any nation, the International President had the full power to use the armies and navies of all the other nations to punish such rebellious or disobedient nation. Such a pledge on the part of each nation, that her army and navy should be so used, was to be the cardinal qualification of entry into membership of the International Republic.

6. The International Republic was to exist for the purpose of protecting and enforcing international laws and treaties, and especially for preventing war, and all of its powers were carefully defined. No power was to be delegated to it by inference. The rights of nations were left as before, with the exceptions reposed in the International Government. No nation was to be interfered with, or prevented from dealing with its

own subjects and laws, but no nation could pass laws restricting the rights of other nations, nor could one nation enter into treaties or agreements with another nation.

7. Certain laws were specially vested in the International Government, such as laws of marriage and divorce, immigration laws, and import and export laws.

8. The International Republic should be maintained by direct tax of a proportionate amount from each member nation, based on a percentage on the total army and navy expenditures by each nation for the years 1912, 1913, and the first half of 1914.

In his closing remarks, Paul pointed out that the total expenses of maintaining the International Republic for any one year could not exceed the reduction in naval expenditures of Great Britain for one year, under the new arrangement; while the annual expenditures of the German Empire for such purposes would easily keep up the world organization for five years.

During the last twenty minutes of the speech, the Canadian Premier was in the audience. When Beauvais had taken his seat, the Premier came forward, and after briefly explaining the cause of his absence, excused himself from delivering an address, saying:

"From what I could see, and especially from what I heard, I am sure you are the gainers. The

speaker, M. Paul Beauvais, in my opinion, has tonight issued a call to the nations."

Paul Beauvais, however, was not prepared for the morrow. The newspapers criticized his effort unmercifully—yes, praised his oratory,—but said he had wheedled his audience—an audience gathered to hear an eminent statesman—into listening to a lot of twaddle. England would never consent to being throttled by an International "Republic." One paper said it was a little unfortunate that "unballasted" students should be permitted to harangue about things which might engender feeling among peaceful nations. Another made a great ado over the capital of the International Republic. What nation would consent from the start for the capital to be established in any given spot? "Nations," said that fiery sheet, "exist for their own aggrandizements. If England should come in at all, the International Capital would have to be in London." *The Flaming Standard* stated it was a pity that Mr. Baddington had unwittingly made the error of characterizing the youngster's speech as a "Call to the Nations!"

Nevertheless, every paper printed the full text of the "Constitution." The proposed instrument was telegraphed and cabled to every important country, where it was attacked as the "effusion from the feverish brain of an Oxford enthusiast!" *The Chicago Tribune* carried a cartoon on its front page, representing the dignified Miss Oxford non-

chalantly joining the group of Chicago University cranks!

The London correspondent of *The New York World*, however, that night, after the delivery of the speech, telephoned to New York a just account of the affair, and insisted that his paper champion the new idea and give prominence to the "Constitution." Consequently that publication stood alone in the United States as an advocate of the International Republic.

The only paper in London that risked its reputation in printing a kind word for the proposal was the *London Times*. It was not ashamed to repeat Premier Baddington's words, that the effort was a "Call to the Nations."

When Paul Beauvais read the bitter criticisms next day, he was utterly cast down. From the meeting that night, he had returned to Oxford, elated and enthusiastic. In the early morning he awoke to believe himself the laughing puppet of the world. How could they be so blind? What sentence had he proclaimed that was so sharp as to stir such attacks? After all, his pet International Republic had met its doom. He was inconsolable. The professors could not say anything that would brighten the way—he must forever be the target of the vituperous press, and be pointed at by people, who would call him an upstart. His gloom was not lessened in the days that followed, when he was forced to continue reading counter-attacks and

ridiculous squibs from the main onslaught. To his dismay, he found that the papers of the world had taken it up, and for a week he had to dodge cameras and persistent reporters.

While still smarting from the ill usage, he received a peremptory letter from his father, demanding that he return to Ste. Genevieve at once. "I never dreamed," wrote the irate Raoul Beauvais, "that you could be so imprudent as to make a fool of yourself."

Newspaper men had been besieging the master of the Château Morestier.

However, a letter came from Paul's mother which helped him to find his equilibrium again. It ran:

"My dear Son:

"It would have been the triumph of my life if I could have heard your speech in Queen's Hall. The fact that papers circulated criticisms is evidence you touched the vital chord of the great need. All of them admit you carried your audience to conviction, and I am sure, among that vast throng of great men, you have made many friends.

"Take courage. In my estimation you have succeeded. You always said to me, that if you could make people talk, even make them angry, you would be happy. You have set the world talking and abusing you, but you

have kindled the fire. Lift up your head, and be superior to your critics.

"I have before me the quoted paragraphs of the *London Times*; which appeared in the *Figaro*. To my mind, these sober expressions will turn out to be the reconsidered views of the world."

Paul had taken all of his examinations, and it was not necessary for him to remain longer at Oxford, and, inasmuch as his mother had been provided by the foster father with ample funds to see him through college, which amount was yet large, he wrote to her, suggesting that he go to Germany and take up some special courses. The consent was given, and he prepared to depart for Heidelberg at once.

Before going, Paul wrote to M. Beauvais, and stated he would guard the honor of the family, but that since he was a man approaching the age of twenty-five, he would have to be responsible to himself alone for any opinions that might seem worthy of expression. There was nothing curt in the letter, but it gave the elder Beauvais to understand that his authority had ceased.

CHAPTER XIX

A FAILURE

"MY DEAR Miss Von Kielstadt," said Paul, on entering the Baron's drawing-room the evening before his departure for Heidelberg, "I have brought your watch."

"Oh, you did not need to trouble," she said naively; it was a mere accident—you couldn't have avoided it."

"I should not be happy, and know I had carelessly destroyed His Majesty's gift to you. Here is the watch fully restored to its original beauty. Everything is the same—except the replaced parts. They were obtained, however, from the same factory that made the watch originally—I am sure it is now quite as good as it was in the beginning."

Ellinda hoped it would be a new watch. Despite her protestations, Paul was shrewd enough to detect her disappointment.

Alfred had discovered the trap, and warned him.

"But—" Ellinda began.

"I know," said Paul quickly,—the diamond ring that was on the chain—the one that was crushed and the stone lost."

"It never entered my mind (this was a falsehood), and I had really forgotten the old thing."

"I hadn't," said Paul smiling agreeably. It was

so much crushed that I could not restore it, and I was compelled to purchase a new one."

"Oh, how lovely!" said the artful Ellinda, hoping he would produce the ring—and he should put it on her finger! She had whispered about that she expected to become engaged to the gallant young Frenchman, and the ring—well, it would help!

"The ring will be sent up by the jeweler in a few minutes," said Paul, with apparent unconcern. "I shall remain until it is safe in your hands."

"You are so kind and thoughtful, M. Beauvais. I am sure you have done more than I could have expected of anyone."

The servant announced a messenger from Enfield & Shelby's, the jewelers.

"Mr. Enfield has brought the ring in person," said Paul. "If you do not mind, may he come in?"

"I don't like for tradesmen to enter the drawing-room," said Ellinda, coloring and showing irritation. "I'll go to the door."

Paul could hear the conversation.

You are Miss Ellinda Von Kielstadt?" asked Mr. Enfield.

"Yes, sir."

"I have a diamond ring for you, one selected by M. Paul Beauvais to replace one accidentally destroyed some time ago, the original ring having been given you by your father. You will please sign here."

Ellinda signed the delivery book. A carbon slip was handed to her with the package, and Mr. Enfield bowed and hastened on his way.

Ellinda came back into the parlor, flushed and her eyes flashing. Paul observed that she read the carbon slip as she turned from him to the window. It receipted for the ring, fully described as "One to replace a certain diamond ring, etc.!"

At that moment, Paul was relieved to see the Baron and Baroness pass the open door. He called to them.

"Come in!" rising. It's just time for me to go, and I shall take my leave of the family at one time."

Ellinda faced him scornfully, and would have said something, but for the fact that her father and mother entered and were fawning over the young man.

"You will not remain for dinner?—eh?—it has been several weeks since you were here. We have missed you, and wondered what could be keeping you, and now you run off when we have you," the Baron began volubly; "and I have not had one special talk with you since your great speech."

Paul rather liked the Baron, notwithstanding the fact that he now believed him an old hypocrite.

"Of course, M. Paul is going to stay," the Baroness began sweetly; "he cannot be so busy now—Frederick tells me he has passed all of his examinations."

"Mother, you must not persuade M. Beauvais," put in Ellinda. He says he must go."

"Really I must not remain," said Paul. "I must catch a train for the Channel tonight. I have come to bid you farewell, and to thank you for the many courtesies you have extended me during my student days. I hope I may some day be in position to show my appreciation. You have been exceedingly kind."

"So!" said the Baron pompously, opening his eyes.

"Yes; I am going to travel a little in Germany."

"But it is so sudden. You should have come to me, and I could have advised you about hotels, and given you other information. It leaves me quite in the lurch."

The Baron was truly crestfallen.

"That I acknowledge," said Paul. In keeping other things in order, I have quite neglected many of my friends, and I regret it. I have no doubt lost by failing to come to you—since you know Germany so well."

"Is there not something I can do?" pleaded the Baron. It's not entirely too late."

"Papa, don't you see you are keeping M. Beauvais. He's in a hurry!" said Ellinda with more emphasis than seemed necessary.

"No, no; there's nothing I can think of—thank you. I must now say good-bye."

The Baroness tried to weep.

Elinda gave him a limp hand and said "good-bye" with a scornful ring.

The Baron followed him to the gate, palavering and wresting from him what train he would take from London, what Channel boat,—suggesting the *Fatherland* made the trip to Flushing in three hours, instead of eight as in the old days—and a lot of things which more or less worried Paul. "Really—I'm sure you'll understand,—really I'll miss you, and my dear Ellinda will cry after you, M. Beauvais. You know,—“here the Baron pulled Paul down so as to whisper in his ear; “you know she is very fond of you!”

Paul disengaged himself and hurried on his way.

“Phew!” he said, “I’ve finished with that. Never again must I be caught in a trap.”

In London he stopped a day with Alfred and Victor. They were enjoying their stay in the great city. Victor declared he did not know when he could get consent of his mind to return to France. “I like the English misses—they are very charming,” he said. Alfred, too, was enthusiastic. He had begun to accomplish some excellent work in the National Portrait Gallery. Several orders for paintings had already been received, and he contemplated opening a temporary studio.

When Paul told Alfred about the outcome of the Von Kielstadt affair, the brothers laughed. “Look sharp in future,” said Victor, who was tangled up in at least three cases of the heart at that moment.

"By the way, Paul," said Alfred, "you did set things in motion from Queen's Hall!—that was a great speech."

"Do you think so?"

"Of course it was. Why, I've talked with a dozen men who heard you, and all of them say it was fine."

"But the newspapers didn't like it," said Paul.

"Oh, they criticised your fiery attacks on some of the governments. If you read carefully the comments in the leading papers in London, they were only doing their duty—in a way. Not one of them found any real fault with the system you proposed. You will find, my dear Paul, that every one of them will come to view your ideas in an entirely different light before one year has elapsed. Did you notice particularly what appeared in the daily paragraphs of the *Pall Mall Gazette*?"

"Yes, I have kept every word."

"Well, that paper hinted that many things you said would sink deeper as time went on—the 'Constitution' was rather praised in one of the squibs."

"Oh, it's just as well it happened that way," said Paul. At first I was terribly hurt over some of the criticisms, but I have come to realize that such a speech must necessarily antagonize. I put forward the truth wholly unadorned. Newspapers must give the news,—and have the right to criticize. I suppose some things I said were hard on England. However, I didn't spare France—and

certainly Germany came in for all I could lay my hand to; and even the United States thought I was rough."

"That was why the newspapers attacked you. It's a wonder they didn't say more. You turned the searchlight on every nation and pointed out the sins."

"Yes; but I gave the remedy. After all I'm glad I made the speech. I thought I would be forever ashamed of it—after seeing the papers, but now I am proud of it. I believe something will come of it when everyone has had time to think it out for himself. The papers will understand me better in the end. I agree with you, they have not treated me badly, and I believe much that appeared would not have been printed if the reporters had heard the first hour of my address. You see, they came in to hear the Honorable Baddington, of Canada, since he was announced for nine o'clock."

"*The Daily Telegraph* allowed for that, if you remember. Its comment was couched in careful language. It found no fault with your 'Constitution,' and it printed it in full."

In the evening, the three brothers dined at the Hotel Cecil. Alfred and Victor had spent the day with Paul, who was busy making brief calls on friends, to bid them good-bye. He insisted that his two brothers go with him everywhere, for he wished all of his friends to know them. But they were alone at the Cecil. They talked about the

table long after the people had left the restaurant, and in one way and another got into closer touch with each other. Perhaps few brothers ever got on so well when they were children at home. However, school duties and differing tastes had separated them much during the past six years, and, in the meantime, each had come into the state of manhood. But the short intervals of association in the past weeks, the day in London, and the dinner at the Cecil, brought them to a common basis of understanding. And it was well, for plans were being perfected at Ste. Genevieve, that would require the united efforts of Paul, Alfred, and Victor,—and the mother—to prevent real harm to the family.

Alfred and Victor went to the station with Paul, and it was agreed the three would meet in Brussels, to go home together on the 1st of May.

When Paul reached the Channel boat *Fatherland* he saw Baron von Kielstadt running all about, looking for him!

He slunk into the shadows and thought a minute. He had supposed himself clear of the Baron, but there he was, dogging his footsteps. Paul sent for one of the stewards on the boat.

"Here's a piece of gold. Take my trunk and other baggage on the boat. When you arrive at Flushing, send them to the Diesseldorf Hotel."

The lackey grinned appreciatively, and began to obey orders.

Paul hailed a cab. "Put me down at the *Sky Pilot*," he said. Fifteen minutes later, when the *Sky Pilot* spread her wings in the heavens, Paul Beauvais was a passenger. He watched the light of the *Fatherland* far below, and wondered if the Baron were still pacing her decks.

"The devil!" sputtered Count von Essenhendel. You say you have failed. I sent you to England to succeed. A German should never return with such a tale. You have failed! Out of my sight, then—be gone!"

"But you will listen, I hope—just a little!" pleaded the distracted Baron. I did my best. He is one clever fellow, this son of yours. He will not permit any man to lead him by the nose."

"So!"

"Even so, my dear Count."

"But that is no reason. You didn't have to lead him by the nose. Damn it! I didn't send you to England to subordinate a son of mine. You couldn't force a Von Essenhendel! You should have persuaded him."

"Ah, my dear Count, you speak the truth. It's impossible to force a Von Essenhendel, and it would seem quite as difficult to persuade one. The father is even more unreasonable than the son!"

The Count understood—or tried to. He sat for a moment, drawing his purplish lips tightly over his teeth, as if trying to control his temper. The Baron's failure was a thing inconceivable to him.

"But what was Ellinda doing all the while? Has she no sense? Has she no idea of responsibility?"

"Ellinda tried, Count. Believe me, she did all in her power. I tell you this son is no ordinary man. Did you not read his London speech?"

"Yes, yes. A lot of rot—his head's stuffed with ideas."

"And yet he has his father's brains," said the Baron, resorting to an attempt at irony.

"That I know! The boy's all right—I'm not saying anything against him. All he needs is a good German wife. I thought your daughter would do, but you've wasted your time and my money. It seems your daughter will not suit—my son must look for another."

"Perhaps you could help me to win him over, my dear Count."

"Win?—the devil. Pay you to do your work!—then do it for you afterwards? Get out of my sight!"

"I've done the best I could!" whimpered the old man, rising to go.

"Leave me!" shouted the Count, who was beginning to pace the floor.

"Oh, Uncle! you will not be mean to an old man, will you?" cried Carlina, the pretty niece, who ran into the room, just then—her soft white robes fluttering as she swept past the defeated Baron.

"I'm mean to no one. I've fed and clothed this cringing hypocrite for four years to enable him to accomplish something. He comes back, and whines, 'I can't!' Leave me, Carlina."

"Think of my poor Frederick!" said the girl, beginning to cry.

"Your poor Frederick, indeed! He can become a waiter in an English hotel—they prefer German waiters!"

"Think, Uncle, what you are doing!"

There was despair in the young lady's very tones. She sank hopelessly defeated on one of the large upholstered chairs, and covered her face with her hands.

"I did the best I could!" whined the Baron again.

"What would you have me do?" the Count stormed at him. Haven't I been liberal to a fault? Haven't I fed you? I—I—took you out of abject poverty in Berlin, and made a nobleman of you for four years—kept you in splendor! What would you!"

The Count quickened his pace, and lit and threw away several cigarettes.

At this outburst of vehemence, the Baron almost sprang off the floor at the last, "What would you!"

"Please, Uncle, listen to reason. The Baron has done everything he could."

"I did my best!" repeated the Baron for the tenth time.

"Away! I say. What would both of you!"

"My poor Frederick! For Frederick's sake, Uncle."

"My son——"

"The devil! your son—out! out! out!"

Carlina fell at the Count's feet and began to beg.

"What would you!" he shouted again.

"My poor Frederick!" was all she could say.

"Yes, yes, you cry 'My poor Frederick!' But what would you!"

"May I have my Frederick?"

"Who said you couldn't have him? Take him! Take the whole Von Kielstadt family! Only leave me!"

Carlina dried her tears, and tried to kiss the blustering Count, but he kept out of her reach by standing erect. His frontal avoirdupois made a sufficient barrier. Then finally she led the Baron out, calling back, "Thank you, Uncle!"

The Count slammed the door.

A few minutes later, Dr. Badenheim entered. He found the Count sitting in his deep leather chair, looking very red, with purplish spots under his eyes and about his mouth. He was still fuming and sputtering. Paintings of Von Essenhendels on the wall seemed to be approving of the Count for living up to the ideals of the house.

"What on earth?" began the lawyer.

"That son of mine has defeated our plans. He wouldn't fall in with our schemings. Everything was lovely up to a week ago—Ellinda von Kiel-

stadt wrote she expected to become engaged at once, and here this morning, the old Baron comes in and pleads failure."

"So!"

"And think of the money I've advanced!"

"It's too bad, Count."

"And the plan to force Raoul Beauvais out of the Company is not working any too well, is it?"

It was now Dr. Badenheim's turn to assume the defensive. Before replying, he twisted the up-turned ends of his moustache, and pulled at the lower corners of his waistcoat, while there was a note of impatience in Von Essenhendel's attitude.

"Lederfrank's report to me, Count, is not encouraging. He says Beauvais is going to fight to hold his shares."

"Now, Doctor, you and I have been friends a long time. I tell you—I warn you that my plans must not fail. I can dare anything, risk anything, but I cannot endure defeat."

Dr. Badenheim spurred himself to meet the attack.

"But look here, Count, you're lapsing into the old fault of the Germans. They cannot endure defeat. Remember the armistice signed with the United States and the Allies in 1918."

"Never mind about that! This boy of mine must be watched; must be induced to marry a German girl, if possible. The Baron says he is now traveling in Germany, but will go back to

Ste. Genevieve shortly. I suppose you and Lederfrank must see to it, for then, if anything goes amiss, I can blame you—do you understand?"

"Your statements are perfectly clear."

"No, they're not. I haven't finished. That part of my plans referring to Paul—yes, that's clear. Well, listen to me: you and Lederfrank mustn't fail to get me those shares—understand! If you fail, the Devil will make me stir up a row that will shake the earth—this part of it anyway. Get my full meaning!—you mustn't fail!"

"Oh! but you mustn't be unreasonable, Count."

Dr. Badenheim got up, and kicked out his square-toed boots as if to straighten his trousers.

"I've always known you to be most just—if sometimes unreasonable. You're charitable, provided you have your way. Few men would have troubled to help Beauvais. I've said to myself it was an insane thing to do. Frankly, I could never understand you. You were guilty of what soldiers have done for thousands of years—why should you have taken it so much to heart? It's all very well about that hand-to-hand fight in the trench—the impression the Frenchman made on you;—even the impression that the wife made on you—but it's bosh."

"Do you wish me to understand that you presume to criticize?"

"Oh! now, we'll not get into that. Don't misunderstand me! You have the right to do whatever

you like with Beauvais, or the Beauvais. It's perhaps noble of you to want to make recompense—or benefit this young man, but, if he will not allow you, why trouble?"

"I will not be turned from my course. That's just the point, Doctor—you mustn't fail."

Dr. Badenheim was looking out the century-old window, and pretended to be following the course of a small boat on the Rhine.

Count von Essenhendel continued:

"Don't you understand that a German can never take defeat?"

The Doctor turned slowly, and smiled at him steadily.

"But they have taken defeat, Count. They have suffered greater humiliation than ever did Napoleon, or any of the previous peoples of earth."

"I can't help it! If my plans go wrong, I'm all undone!"

"That's why I say you're wrong. You've done an extraordinary piece of work—charity, if you wish to call it that. I'd say it's expensive folly. Anyway, I consider that you've done more than could have been demanded of you, even by the moral law, and the rule of thumbs of the prophets. But leave it. I don't wish to spoil it all for you by trying to prove that you have made a silly ass of yourself. Furthermore, to be good and obedient, I'll try to do whatever I can to wed your son to a German, and I'll also prove to be

a paradox by demanding the sale of Beauvais' shares."

"You don't need to be sarcastic. I can't listen to your twaddle. If you don't wish to carry out my commands without talking back, leave me! My will must be complied with. I can't endure defeat!"

CHAPTER XX

THREE YOUNG MEN

ALL day the three brothers, Paul, Alfred, and Victor, dodged about the streets of Brussels, purchasing presents for their sisters and mother, and something now and again for the father.

"I've such a collection of things from London and Heidelberg, and with these added, what shall I do?" asked Paul, when they were packing in the hotel. He was perspiring, but looked very happy in the midst of the medley of packages and boxes.

"Can't help you," replied Alfred and Victor.

"See this dainty thing!" exclaimed Alfred in despair, holding up a lace head-dress; "it's sure to be ruined in this trunk."

"*Petite* Hermance will wonder what happened to this package of ribbons—if this bottle of perfume is spilled," said Victor, struggling away over in the corner.

The busy hum of motor vehicles came up from the streets below, and the regular line of passenger airplanes were making a noisy crossing just overhead, but the brothers were unmindful of the outer world.

At last they were off for home. For years they had come and gone at vacation time, but now they were returning to remain—to find places for themselves in the life of Ste. Genevieve. Their educa-

tions, as far as universities and special tutors could go, had been completed, and it only remained for them to add to their skeleton foundations by beginning life in real earnest. It would be a part of their work to construct the palaces or hovels of their future.

Mother and father and sisters met them at the railway station in the home town. Marie and *Petite-Hermance*, beautiful girls just home from the Convent, were beside themselves with joy—to them, big brothers were extraordinary personages. The mother wept from sheer excitement, like all mothers do, and the father said, for the lack of anything better, “Glad your educations are finished, boys. Welcome to you.” And there were friends hanging back in the crowd, waiting for the family greeting to be finished.

Alfred kept a careful watch on his father, and although the polite Frenchman went out of his way to say something to Paul, Alfred thought it fell short of the welcome that should have been extended, for since that night several years before, when M. Beauvais had told Alfred that he had been selected as the future head of the Beauvais family, the latter had concluded his father must harbor some disapproval of Paul.

Then, of course, there was the open breach caused by Paul’s advocacy of the International Republic. Paul’s letter to M. Beauvais declaring his independence would not soon be forgiven.

"Papa, I say you mustn't be sulky. Go on up to Paul and say to him again you're glad he has come home. Put some heart into it—go on!" and Alfred pushed his father forward.

M. Beauvais did go to Paul and say something more, which Alfred could not hear. However, the second son had gained his point—and didn't wish to inspect too closely how his father had complied.

"That's it. Paul is just the finest man in the world, and I'm not going to stand your snubbing while I'm around—understand, father? It hurts me." But M. Beauvais paid little attention.

Many persons sent cards of welcome; the neighbors called, and the evening, at the Château Mores-tier, was filled with enjoyable incidents which would be always remembered. Dr. Anson Joumonville was there—the old Doctor and good Father Pelletier were both dead. *Grand'mère* Dauphin, just a week over ninety-seven years old, was wheeled into the château in a chair. She had nearly lost her hearing, but could see well, and had many quaint things to say.

"Hermance," she began aside, while the smart younger generation came in, "Paul has the same satisfied expression he used to wear when you carried him to the fields to lie in the shade and play with his toes while you worked."

Old Roger, the joker, had also come, hobbling on his wooden leg and two canes. He was well

over eighty, and could not boast a single tooth in his mouth. His jokes were always to the point, however, and he stood by pouring forth a volley to the company of guests, feeling it his duty to be faithful to his rôle.

Dr. Joumonville arose at the end of the long table, in the dining room, and made an appropriate after dinner talk, in which he stated that M. Beauvais and *Madame* should be proud of their children.

"You have reared them in the full strength of modern usefulness. There are two pretty daughters, reflections of their mother's graces; and there are three sons—one a musician of note, one a painter of great promise, and one destined to be a man of affairs and a statesman."

Throughout the home festivities, *Madame* Morestier, who was still clinging to life by a mere thread, remained silent, but seemed childishly happy. The last years of her existence had been spent in a sort of pathetic reverie. Before the Great War, she was a greedy reader of books and magazines; and again she read much in the library. Something had slipped in the machinery of her mind, leaving her peculiarly serene and quiet, but ever and anon she surprised *Madame* Beauvais and her husband by giving expression to snatches of prophecy. At such times, she appeared to be speaking in a trance. Often she strove in the byways of history, and after recounting accurately a long series of events, launched into wonderful interpretations

of the meanings of those things to future generations. Again, she discoursed on the happenings of everyday occurrence. M. Beauvais would listen to her and ask questions, but she could never weave in anything from without. Her mind acted apparently in some inexplorable sphere of independence. A moment after these outbursts, she lapsed into an innocent feebleness that was pitiable.

Dr. Joumonville studied her case, and said her intellect, at intervals, was aroused, and while in activity, reviewed accumulated stores of knowledge, as if freed from shackles fastened upon her in sufferings on the night of the invasion. However, he had no explanation for her wise comments on matters of commonplace.

That night, after neighbors had gone, and the family continued to sit and talk, Madame Mores-tier looked upon the group, and began to speak:

"My children, put me now on the couch, for I would talk before the night wears longer."

They laid her on the couch, which was made especially for her.

"*Bien!*" she said.

"Is there anything you want, mother?" asked Madame Beauvais.

"A little cordial, if you please."

Paul brought a bottle and a tiny glass.

"Thank you, my son; you are very kind—you have a good heart," the frail old lady said.

"Shall we go?" asked M. Beauvais.

"No, my eldest son; you, Hermance, and all the children remain."

They stood grouped about the couch, ready to say good-night. Helène, the maid, who slept in her room, was already at the door, awaiting her mistress's pleasure.

"Helène," said Madame Morestier, "I shall not require you tonight. You have been faithful. Good-bye, and God bless you, Helène, for having cared for an old woman."

Madame Beauvais went to the door, and told the maid to wait outside awhile.

"I fear you are tiring yourself, *Grand'mère*," said *Petite-Hermance*.

"No, no, my little granddaughter, I've strength of which you know not—if it will only last for me to speak."

"Perhaps you'd better sleep, mother," suggested M. Beauvais; "you'll be stronger to speak to-morrow. The excitement has been too great for you tonight."

There seemed to be stealing over the family group a foreboding of fear. Hermance and the children expressed this in occasional clearings of their throats.

Madame Morestier continued:

"I've been living for this night, my elder son." She always referred to Raoul as her elder son. "I shall soon sleep the peaceful sleep."

Hermance began to weep silently.

Madame Morestier motioned for them to be seated.

"Over the land has passed a great storm. It is some time since that peace has come upon the world following this storm. There has been an attempt at unifying peoples of the earth. Politicians and patriots, for gain, have persuaded the nations to believe the war has gone forever. How foolish is the behavior of nations!"

She seemed lapsing into a detached state, and they recognized her words were prophetic. She repeated:

"Over the land has passed a great storm." Then as if struggling to pick up the thread again, she said: "It was the unrest of nations seeking a balm, a solution to problems too great for the minds of men. The earth came in for a scourging—terrible missiles of steel have furrowed the fields. Trees were shivered, and the warhorse trampled grasses and flowers. Blood soaked the village greens and the hillsides, and there were groanings of the wounded by day and night. Many millions never returned from the fields of battles. Widows and orphans wait until this day, and start at the stirring of a leaf.

"Then there came a respite. Old generations have been disappearing. The new is already standing with hands on the knocker, and, behold! I, an old woman, who has been looked upon, for these twenty-five years, as demented, now see beyond

this vale into a future that shall be blessed with peace.

"Today, I said: 'Permit me to see, and I shall go in peace.' I closed my eyes, and lo! three young men, comely and upright, came to me singly that I might see.

"The youngest drew near me. He made music on a stringed instrument, music exceedingly plaintive and sweet. His brow was fair—he would cheer the world. I said: 'Go on, my son, and play to the multitudes. Look on the faces of maids, but beware!'

"The second young man in age came and declared his devotion to art. He would live in the galleries of the world, and trace on canvas, marvellous subtleties of beauty. He was clean of heart, and not given to covetousness. Riches of earth were not tempting to him, neither did he desire contention. I said: 'I see the young man possessing divine inspiration—go and worship at the feet of the masters.'"

Her eyes closed, and she breathed softly. M. Beauvais and his wife and the children stood about as if rooted to the floor. Their breathing was audible, and no one spoke, lest the spell be broken. They looked anxiously at one another.

Again she moved slightly, and said: "My strength is passing. Open the window and give me air."

Marie threw open the hinged sash, and the moon-

light streamed in to aid the single frosted electrical bulb.

Finally, Madame Morestier resumed as follows:

"And there came yet the third and oldest, a strong man, much loved by his two brothers. His coming was hindered by shackles which an enemy was trying to fasten on him, and out of the world arose cries for help. This young man was unlike his brothers, and he turned ever to the appeals of the four corners, as if he would go to them. His face was open. Selfishness had never defiled him. Out of the muddle of sounds and struggles appeared two goddesses—one of Liberty and the other of Imperial dignity that confronted him and said: 'Choose whom you will serve.' Two men stood by him also, and waited on his decision."

Once more the shriveled eyelids closed, and she was still. They waited long, but there was no awakening.

CHAPTER XXI

A FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE

MADAME BEAUVAIS had scored the first victory in championing Paul. The same night she and M. Beauvais came to an understanding. She replied to M. Pierre de Robincourt's letter as follows:

"My d  ar M. de Robincourt:

"Your letter to my husband regarding my son Paul's early attachment for your daughter, Mademoiselle Yvonne, received. M. Beauvais has been much occupied these last days, and, inasmuch as I have always been responsible for Paul, and, by arrangement, his education is under my direction, your message has been handed to me.

"Permit me, my dear M. de Robincourt, to express to you my very great satisfaction that you are pleased with my son Paul, and that you are willing he should pay his respects to Mademoiselle Yvonne. M. Beauvais and I consider ourselves honored, and acknowledge our obligation to you and Madame de Robincourt.

"For the present, I am of the opinion that the interests of both our children would be best conserved if you and I agree to a formal correspondence between them. Paul is leaving

shortly for Paris to continue his education, and afterwards he goes to England. Several years will elapse before he is a mature man, and such a relationship as I suggest could not be harmful to either Mademoiselle Yvonne or Paul. Furthermore, you and I could always supervise the letters.

"M. Beauvais will write to you tomorrow, confirming my letter.

"With compliments and an expression of high esteem for you, Madame de Robincourt, and Mademoiselle Yvonne, in which M. Beauvais would be included, I beg to remain,

"Yours most sincerely,

"HERMANCE MORESTIER-BEAUVAIS."

A servant was dispatched at once with the letter to M. de Robincourt. A copy had been made, and M. Beauvais took it into the library to her husband, who was, at the moment, penning his reply to M. de Robincourt's communication.

"Hermance, I'm astonished! How could you!" M. Beauvais exclaimed, when he glanced at the salutation.

"Read the letter, Raoul. It is on the way now to M. de Robincourt—the man, Jacques, is taking it."

For the first time in their married life, Raoul lost control of his temper, to the extent that he became red in the face from anger. He jumped to his feet, and would have said something, had Her-

mance not looked at him so calmly. With an effort, he managed to keep back the hot words, but immediately left the room. He was gone some time. Eventually, he returned and read the letter.

"You'll pardon me, Hermance?"

"You've said nothing for which you should ask forgiveness," she said sweetly.

"But I felt like saying things."

"It was fine of you to control yourself."

"Yes; but you've beaten me, Hermance. I must be fair and give up when I see you've outgeneraled me." For with all of Raoul's faults, and his intense jealousy toward Paul, no one could doubt his better nature was presided over by a good heart.

M. Beauvais took up his paper and wrote a brief letter to de Robincourt, expressing his pleasure and compliments, and confirming his wife's note. He put the superscription on the envelope, and handed the letter to Hermance to send on the next day.

"Thank you, Raoul; in this, you have reassured me of what I have always known—that you are a great man. I expected you to be angry. I would have forgiven you for becoming violent in speech—as a human being, you were entitled to your expression to savage inclinations, but it was noble of you to restrain yourself. If a man ever deserved credit for being grand in spirit, you've earned the palm. How sweet of you to acknowledge defeat and write this letter!"

The formal correspondence was started. Dainty

notes on perfumed paper were exchanged frequently after Paul went to Paris. M. de Robincourt censored these communications, and, in time, they settled down to about an average of one letter a month. They were in no sense love-letters. The nearest they ever came to getting over the border was when Mademoiselle Yvonne informed Paul of Alfred's attentions to her. Paul supposed M. Beauvais to be back of this attempt, and put a good deal of feeling in several letters, which remained unnoticed by Yvonne. Finally she set him at ease about Alfred, and again settled back into ordinary friendship epistles.

On returning at vacation times, Paul called once or twice, but was always a family guest. This continued for two years, then Paul remained in England. Afterwards, for more than four years, owing to circumstances which neither was fit to control, he had not seen Yvonne, but the monthly letters came regularly to both.

Hence nothing had come of the beautiful bud of a love affair started almost seven years before. Hard study diverted Paul's mind, and absence of the young knight left in Yvonne's memory only a romantic and pleasant recollection, over which she often smiled and day dreamed. She began to wonder what this young man could be like. When the French papers were commenting on his Queen's Hall speech, she raised her eyebrows in inquiry.

Another circumstance had a depressing effect.

M. de Robincourt and M. Beauvais took issue, one with the other, on political questions. M. de Robincourt had been representing the district as a Deputy. At the election four years before, M. Beauvais refused to support his friend, and went to the extreme of doing everything in his power to prevent M. de Robincourt's return to the Chamber of Deputies. However, the opposition failed, but it left strained relations between the old friends, although there was one brief interval when it seemed the difference would be forgotten. Several calls were exchanged, and Alfred painted a portrait of Mademoiselle Yvonne. But shortly afterwards, a bill of importance came up to the house, in Paris, and M. Beauvais was so unfortunate as to write to M. de Robincourt—whom he had not helped to elect—urging him to vote for the measure. The gruff Deputy's stinging reply destroyed the patched-up friendship. Therefore, when Paul and his brothers returned, full-grown men, the de Robincourt prospect was not at all encouraging. Times and people's ways had changed.

As might be expected, M. de Robincourt was of the old school of statesmen. He believed in a strong, centralized government, as near autocracy as possible. All new proposals were measured by him with the conservative standard he kept brightly burnished in his mind. But for his narrow views and unwillingness to be progressive, he would have been taken into the cabinet of ministers. His name

was proposed a number of times, but dropped by the President and leaders as being the red flag in the Chamber to invite an immediate overthrow of the Ministry.

Of course, de Robincourt sneered at the International Republic idea. When criticisms came on Paul's venturesome speech, he laughed. "Just like his crazy father!" he said to Mademoiselle Yvonne, who had read him the paragraph out of the *Echo de Paris*. He went on further to say that evidently the Beauvais family had spent money in vain on Paul. To fill a youngster's head with rank modernisms, was to poison his mind and make him a dangerous man to society.

Mademoiselle Yvonne did not know. Secretly, she resented such wholesale condemnation by her father. She did not like to see Paul's name coupled with new things, for, naturally, she was also of the old imperial stock, and filled to overflowing with the teachings of her father. Perhaps, after all, the young dream of her girlhood, which she could never forget, was so unlike the stern realities of life that it would be blighted by time. But what did it matter? She had not seen Paul for years. No doubt he had changed—if he had fondled the beautiful dream of their meeting as she had done, perhaps he was beginning to discover other things that claimed more of his attention. His letters were scholarly—sometimes enthusiastic over strange things: the comity of nations, brotherly love of

nationalities, everlasting peace. Probably he had developed into a modern David Rossi.

A few days after Paul's return home—and the funeral rites of Madame Morestier had been performed,—he inquired of his mother if a card of welcome, or a note, had come for him from Mademoiselle Yvonne. He was informed nothing had been received. Possibly the young lady did not know he was at home, since he had not written from Heidelberg or Brussels.

Therefore, Paul wrote a formal note, stating his university courses had been completed, enabling him to return home, and he would be pleased to call on Mademoiselle Yvonne, if such met with her approval, and the approval of M. de Robincourt, and Madame de Robincourt, to whom he begged she would graciously convey his compliments. Mademoiselle Yvonne replied promptly, in the following formal lines:

“My dear Paul:

“Your compliments received, announcing the completion of your education and return to Ste. Genevieve, and I have mentioned the same to my father and mother.

“I cannot be forgetful of the fact that you saved my life on one occasion, for which I shall ever be indebted to you; but in view of the estrangement existing between our fathers, and of differences of my own opinions on some questions, I regret that it does not seem

proper for me to extend to you an invitation to call at my father's Château.

"Our friendship has been constant, and it is my wish that it so continue.

"As ever,

Your friend,

"YVONNE DE ROBINCOURT."

Paul read the note and re-read it—"and of differences of my own opinions on some questions," he kept repeating as he sought his mother and handed her the sheet. Hermance read it, and said: "Keep your own counsel for the present."

But Paul went to his room, and placed Yvonne's letter in the package of her previous replies. As other sentimental young men have always done, he bound the bundle with a bit of ribbon, and carefully laid it away. The formal correspondence was closed.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FIRST SKIRMISH

"You were honorable in acknowledging your first defeat," said Madame Beauvais to her husband, and although it has been years since it occurred, I remember it."

"What do you mean?" asked Raoul, a little cross in his manner—business of late was worrying him.

"I mean you have acknowledged you have won in the de Robincourt matter."

"You're not yet clear in your statement."

"Why, Raoul, your disagreement with M. de Robincourt seems to have interfered with the fair prospects of Paul."

"A good thing, too!" said M. Beauvais, as he went off in a hurry to the office.

At that point, there was an armistice in the efforts of Raoul and Hermance to advance their champions.

Immediately, Raoul had his first disagreement with Jacob Lederfrank. He had always liked the Jew, and, notwithstanding tightening of the coils that threatened the Beauvais holdings in the business, he had not discovered Lederfrank's hand. In fact, Lederfrank was guilty of no fraud, neither did he do anything wrong. He merely carried out the wishes of his overlord on the Rhine, without

seeking to know reasons for the orders. But the very day that Madame Beauvais reminded him of Paul's failure, there was real trouble in the office.

Lederfrank began it.

"Raoul, in working out our business, I think it wise for one of your sons to come into the factory, and begin to prepare to take your place when you retire. No doubt my son, Isaac, is already far advanced in going through the various departments."

M. Beauvais had foreseen that day, and half suspected that Lederfrank would want to take Paul into the business.

"I think I can manage the business well enough for my family for some time yet," was Beauvais' rather curt remark.

It nettled Lederfrank for the moment, and under impulse he retorted:

"The right to choose employees is entirely in my hands, according to our original agreement, which has never been violated by either of us to date."

M. Beauvais searched his partner's face for a full minute. Color slowly mounted to the Frenchman's forehead, and he replied angrily:

"Choose, if you must! One thing I ask, leave Paul out of this. We're in trouble enough. You know my feeling towards this son. If he's put here in my way, it'll only irritate me."

"Paul's my choice, sir. You can't expect me to want to spoil the careers of your other sons—they're entirely unsuited to commerce."

Beauvais bounced from his swiveled-chair, and bolted towards the door. Recovering somewhat, he came back—his face blanched with anger, and said:

"I've reasons why I don't want Paul in here."

In unmistakable firmness, Lederfrank shot back at him:

"And whatever they are, Raoul Beauvais, they're foolish reasons. Take it as final. Paul is to come into this office. I think it best for him to work in the office until we get out of this business crisis. After that, he should go below and come on up from the mining of the crude materials to the selling of the finished product."

Beauvais shoved several things about on his desk before sitting down. He whirled in his chair, as if to make a deciding protest, but ended by shouting at Lederfrank:

"Do you mean to say that you propose to ride over my head?"

"Yes," said Lederfrank, in tones that equalled his partner's in temper.

"Then I'll sell my shares."

"You may do that, too, Beauvais. Our original contract provides *for just that contingency*."

"What contingency!"

"Why, the selling of your shares! Get out your

copy of the contract and read it before we discuss this further, and perhaps break in our friendship."

M. Beauvais frowned, and enraged and much preferring to have had an out-and-out quarrel, arose and went to his private safe and found the yellowed document. He had not really read it since it was signed about twenty years before. He took plenty of time, and perused it slowly twice, then spoke to Lederfrank:

"Well, you'll not get my shares. I see my hands are tied. You're just as shrewd as the rest of the Hebrews. If I object to follow you, I'm lost—I must sell to you at par. *You don't get them!* I suppose I'll have to stand for Paul. Employ him, if you wish. You'll soon find his high-flown university ideas won't run smoothly in making and selling fertilizer."

"All right, sir. Paul will be here in an hour. I shall employ him, and on terms commensurate with his position in your household. Furthermore, I warn you not to interfere with him."

Again M. Beauvais flared up—it was too much to be dictated to by Lederfrank, much less to be warned against his conduct towards Paul.

"You're going too far, Lederfrank."

"It's my right to insist that you interfere with no one, and especially with your son, while in the employ of this company. So reads our contract."

"My son is not your son."

"But for the purpose of this business, Raoul, I'm Paul Beauvais' employer."

"Don't cause me to lose my head altogether."

"You're too sensible, Raoul Beauvais. We've been working together for more than twenty years. You've had evidence of my fidelity to you. I made you rich, and because I contrary you in a senseless jealousy for your son, the brightest and brainiest of your family, you want to be unreasonable. Stop it altogether! I'm not going to stand for any such nonsense."

"If you knew my reason!" Beauvais' voice trembled with emotion.

"Whatever reason you may have, except your insane jealousy, is of no concern to me. It's none of my business, and, on general principles, I say you have no right to be jealous, or to have reasons. Suppose Paul Beauvais—suppose anything. The boy's capable, willing, and I'll lay you a bet of one thousand francs that in time he'll be at the head of this establishment."

"We shall not discuss it, Lederfrank. I give in because I have to. Do as you like. I'm sorry this discussion took place. I believe in you. That's sufficient."

"Never mind, Raoul. You leave matters to me. I like Paul, and to tell you the truth, I have built this business with you entirely for his sake."

There seemed to be no warrant for this last remark, and M. Beauvais took no notice of it.

Lederfrank had always shown preference for Paul, and Beauvais hoped this might explain the whim.

"You can do as you like, I said; nor shall I interfere with Paul. I shall not mention my disapproval to him here, or at home."

"That's all I ask, Raoul. Be fair to the young man—to the devil with your jealousy!"

Paul entered the office at that moment.

"Paul," said Lederfrank, "I've asked that you come here for a purpose."

"I'm here, *Monsieur*. I came as soon as I could after you telephoned. What may I do to lessen your worries?"

Lederfrank chuckled a little at the young man's pleasantry.

"Well, we want you to come into the firm—that is, start in and learn the business as my son, Isaac, is doing, so you and he may run things after your father and I give up."

Paul instinctively cast an inquiring glance in the direction of his father. M. Beauvais' face was an impenetrable mask.

"Shall be glad to, if father wishes it."

"M. Lederfrank, Paul, has charge of such matters, and he has obtained my consent to the arrangement, if it meets your ideas."

Although Paul watched critically for insincerity in M. Beauvais' face, he detected none. He missed, of course, an expression of welcome. There was

nothing in the way his father spoke that could be twisted into meaning reluctance.

"It has always been my desire to come in here and work with you and father, as you know. I have spent longer years at study than is now usually the case, and I did it that I might be more capable when this time should come."

Then, as if searching for something further to say, he went on:

"Why, yes. I'm delighted. I was intending to come down and make the request of my own accord."

This agreed exactly with Raoul's suspicions. He had counted on the forwardness of Paul—as he liked best to call it—bringing him to make the request. He could then have promptly objected, and that would have killed the possibility. But Lederfrank had managed it so as to defeat his former plans.

"The way we're doing with Isaac," Lederfrank went on, "is that he works on a salary until he has gone from bottom to top in the business. He is then to be made a director and shareholder—each father deciding on what basis; that is, how many shares."

"It suits me—where shall I begin?"

"Isaac began in the mines. You must ultimately go there, too, but just now we are passing through a crisis, and it will be best for you to begin in the office. A little later you can go and come the other

way. You see this is a huge business now. We're employing seven thousand people in one way and another."

"I'm ready," said Paul, a triumphant light coming into his face. At last his father must be getting over his sulkiness, and the future undoubtedly promised to be bright.

M. Lederfrank discussed terms of employment, and executed a contract with Paul, which Raoul Beauvais signed as an official of the company.

Paul entered upon his duties at once. He was under the direction of Jacob Lederfrank, and rarely, if ever, came into contact with his father. Lederfrank arranged his work to enable him to get an insight into the system of business in the briefest possible time. The Hebrew foresaw the day when the crisis would come, and he wished to have Paul trained against that time.

But Lederfrank could not see the end. It is forbidden that mere man should be too wise. The crisis produced in the business was not particularly clear to anybody in Ste. Genevieve—even Lederfrank could not see the utility of persecuting Raoul Beauvais; nor did he recognize any yielding on the part of Raoul towards selling his shares. These cogitations he reported to Count von Essenhendel. That something was sure to happen could not be doubted. Such an extraordinary condition in business could not continue for long without breaking into one channel or another. But whatever that

would be, Lederfrank was going to do his duty to the benefit of Paul Beauvais.

M. Beauvais, the foster father, fumed and fretted in secret. He smarted under the treatment heaped upon him by Lederfrank. The Jew had been almost domineering in forcing his wishes upon him. Of course, he could not object. Lederfrank had made it possible for him, a poor soldier, to make a fortune, and, whatever the outcome, he must accept.

Also Paul was easily gaining on him. Nothing seemed to hinder his steady progress. His own boys were excellent fellows, but Paul was superior—despite his dislike for Paul, the father had to admit it.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PAINTING

"AND the light has failed, Alfred. You never knew the story before, and I should not have told you, had you not come to me in such frankness. You can try to carry out father's wish, if you like. You only suspected that I cared for Yvonne. You now know of the meeting in the forest; that I saved her life—you also know there is nothing between us except memory, and that will never die."

"I can't bring myself to make an attempt to win Mademoiselle Yvonne. I told father I couldn't—I suspected you cared, and said so; then he urged me only the more. I also declared I would talk with you. He said I was a fool. For some reason unknown to me, he's against you, Paul, and he wants me to supplant you. In spite of his enmity for Pierre de Robincourt, on account of the labor bill, he would have me make an effort at trickery to capture the daughter. Only this morning, he taunted me saying: 'Paul has outstripped you in everything; he has your rightful place in the firm; you're wasting your time dabbling in oils: marry Yvonne de Robincourt and her fortune.'

"I cannot love Mademoiselle Yvonne. I tell you, though, father is so changed—oh, well, as I've just said, he has been talking thus to me since I was sixteen years old."

"I've no claim, Alfred, as you see. You're free to make the trial for your own happiness. If I could I'd help you."

Alfred laughed in rejection of the suggestion. They were, at the time, walking over the High Bridge, and halted a moment to look down into the languid waters of the Oise.

"No; I shall not try. I have no inclination. The young lady is lovely—especially attractive, but that's one thing, and my own choice another. I'm tired of father's urgings, and, since I have laid everything before you, and you know my feelings, I'm more disgusted with him than ever."

"Don't speak of father in such a way, Alfred—it's not right."

"Oh, Paul, but he's making it very hard for both of us. You're working, endeavoring to solve the puzzle of his business entanglement, and he doesn't appreciate it. He insults you nearly every day—recently I felt constrained to intercede for you. You could have thrown up your hands and quit; but you stay on and pay no attention. Perhaps he'd have me hate you, if he could. It's too much. I tell you, he and I had a scene this morning. I told him plainly he'd no reason to dislike you; that he must be losing his mind."

"Yes," Paul sighed, as if worn out endeavoring to solve the puzzle. Continuing he said: "The best thing to do is to go on about your painting, and forget father has said anything. That's the way I

do. I can't remember having done anything to displease him. I wonder and wonder about his treatment of me, but can't find an answer—mother doesn't help me to understand. If I could only succeed in finding out what is wrong in the business, I should be content."

"Of course, you're right."

"Al, if I were you, I might try to win Made-moiselle Yvonne. You painted her portrait while father and de Robincourt were still quarreling, and it's possible you might find an open door to you."

"No, I couldn't take the flower that is justly yours. I'd be unhappy if I succeeded, after knowing the secret in your heart. Your story impresses me. There's something original and simple about your requesting her to be your sweetheart, and I can hear her reply. Why, I can see the story as it happened—the runaway and the rescue; old *Louis XIV.*, looking back in inquiry at the pretty prize, safe on the pummel of your saddle; the dismount, and the walk home. I can imagine *Louis* might have sniffed at her flowing hair, when you quite forgot him as you talked. No, this world would have a black spot in it for me, if nothing should come of that day dream."

Paul sat with bowed head while Alfred spoke. He had confessed to his brother his secret—had related the events of the ride, and the stroll in the Robincourt Forest, which could never be forgotten. He had acknowledged by shade of words, and a passing

dimming of the eye, that there was an ache deep within, which could never be removed. The artist's touch in making live again the familiar scene, revived the pang which continually made him sad.

"You've fine feelings, Al," was all he said.

He got up and walked away, and in the silvery moonlight, Alfred saw him pass the Château, and enter the pasture. Following him at a distance, the younger brother saw him go over the crest of the hillock towards old *Louis XIV.*, who grazed peacefully on the tender grass. The magnificent old horse recognized his master, and came to meet him. Paul ran his hand caressingly over the fine head, and threw his arms about the animal's neck. Alfred then knew why the great black creature was Paul's most valued possession.

While the days passed, Paul buried himself in the hum-drum of the office. The artist brother was perplexing the horse sense of old *Louis*. For more than a week, just after sunrise every morning, Alfred appeared at the back of the meadow with an odd assortment of trappings—a mildewed bridle and saddle and a canvas, and a box of oils that gave off offensive odors. The retired aristocrat was caught, rigged up with the out-of-date things,—when there were plenty of handsome things in the stable,—and sneaked out of a rear gate, and then ridden over to the Robincourt Forest. Once or twice was all right, but *Louis* could not understand why it had to be repeated every day in his quiet life.

The strangest part of all was the actions of his surreptitious rider. Upon arriving at the crossing in the forest, he always got off, and went through a lot of curious manoeuvres with his canvas and smelly brushes. *Louis* was made to stand in the middle of the road, and one delightful morning, he and the artist almost had a row out there in the still woods. The artist wanted him to bend his fat horse neck around, and look at something which was not there. But finally he did, however, when he found it kept the painter away with his horrid brushes.

Then Alfred came no more to disturb *Louis'* tranquility. One day he left Ste. Genevieve for Paris, and carried with him paraphernalia of oils, brushes, easels, and temporary sketches. He went to begin his life's work. For months he was quiet in his studio. He would let no one come in to see what he did. In vain Victor—gay Victor,—who revelled in the fun of Paris, endeavored to coax Alfred to the boulevards. The latter wrote an occasional letter to his brother Paul, and noted the disheartening maze the business seemed to be drifting into, but kept his mind and heart for the canvas he was coloring and filling with a master's conception of an inspiration. This painting of Paul and Yvonne and the horse in the Robincourt Forest, was ten feet by fifteen feet in size, and intended to be the prize of the young genius.

Throughout the Fall, and far into the new year,

Alfred worked unceasingly, putting his soul and imagination into the picture. Early photographs of Paul were frequently consulted, and the original sketch of Yvonne studied until he could paint her with his eyes closed. The rough drawing made in the forest had been turned and twisted and courted about until nearly dilapidated from much handling. But the wide canvas grew bit by bit under his warm touch. He breathed upon it the spirit of a great artist, and it caught and fixed the subtle glimmer of life.

The boy and the girl seemed to be speaking. The horse's soft skin looked like rich satin, and invited the touch—his lustrous eyes, and ears at attention, were caught at the precise point. The trees—the knotted bodies and the green leaves—were natural to a fault. The *tout ensemble*, the atmosphere of virgin simplicity, the invisible influence, the shades, the light, the blending, the wistful innocence in smile, the wonder in look, the toning in sombre hues, were all there in astonishing grandeur. It was a finished work of art, transcendently perfect in detail, and marvelously grouped and selected to portray its pleasing significance.

The young painter, late in the afternoon, when he had painstakingly brightened the last tremulous leaflet, and made sure of the high lights and shadows—lest the slightest feature might be neglected, arose wearily from the low stool upon which he had been sitting, and taking a few steps away from the canvas,

sank exhausted on the oil-bespattered floor. He slept in peace. All night the scene was enacted and re-enacted by the creations he had put on the broad sheet. They spoke of the fallen *Dante* down in the corner; he heard the frightened charger's whinny; he felt *Louis'* hot breath on his face. Now Paul and Yvonne turned and walked away, and were lost in the lowering foliage. Again the dash of the runaway stopped in his picture, and again he watched it through another disappearance in the forest avenue.

"Humph!" he exclaimed, shielding his eyes from the glare of the sun in the morning. "I've been asleep. Well it's done. The world may now judge."

That same day, Alfred invited the Committee of the Paris Exhibition of Arts to his studio. In five minutes they had accepted the painting entitled, "The Story Immortalized," although they remained for an hour to discuss its merits. Then men came and removed the painting to the Arts Hall, where it was set in a deep frame, and hung against the center panel of the colonnaded room. It would be three weeks yet before the doors opened to the throng that was already collecting from all parts of the earth.

In this interval, Alfred occupied himself as hundreds of others have done, whose work had been accepted—in sending out invitations to friends, stating with evident pride: "The Committee of the Paris Exhibition of Arts has graciously granted

permission for the display of my latest painting." The time otherwise left to him was devoted to Victor, who, notwithstanding his absorbing love for music, and easy success in securing a substitute position in the Opera Orchestra, was here and there in half of the fashionable homes in the metropolis. He introduced Alfred until the latter cried "enough." Victor was a gentleman, as well as a "dandy,"—and had become engaged to a pretty French brunette, whose father managed the Opera. The girl's father was rich, which said much for Victor's business judgment.

The Exhibition opened. Crowds came and went. Alfred's forest painting caught the popular eye, and critics halted long before it—everyone accorded it first place among the large collection of the works of numerous artists. He tabulated more than a dozen offers for it, promising answers after the close of the Exhibit. He knew his name was made, and he could command a place of eminence in the world of art. But he received his congratulations quietly, and stood by, day after day, waiting and watching for the coming of those for whom he had wrought the work of love.

Madame Beauvais, Paul, Marie, and Hermance came, and were enthusiastic over the work. To the mother's surprised, questioning look, Alfred replied: "Paul told me!" The father came last of all, dragging with him the load of business worry, but he was satisfied with Alfred—although disapproving

of his subject,—and went away to take up his burden.

And so on and on the days sped until the closing came. At ten o'clock of the night of the last day, the Exhibition would come to an end. It rained all the afternoon, and the crowds in and out the entrance thinned to a few stragglers. Madame Beauvais, ill with a headache, remained in the hotel. The daughters were at the Opera. Paul, who had gone back to the factory with his father, came into Paris late that afternoon, in response to a telegram from Alfred. The brothers sauntered about in the deserted building, stopped casually before some painting, but talked mostly of the business at home. There was still perhaps a score of people in the main exhibit room, where Alfred's masterpiece hung, but they were already becoming restless to go. In the off wings, workmen were drawing the blinds, and the guards were impatient. Alfred had just drawn Paul into an alcove to the left of the painting to point out to him a new splendor that the lights were emphasizing.

"Papa, I must see this painting, 'The Story Immortalized,' even if it is closing time," a clear, musical voice said.

"I mustn't stop in here—I'm smoking," said the man.

"Then wait just outside. I'll return shortly. Please wait, papa, dear."

To the guard, she said: "I should like to see 'The

Story immortalized.' It's bad to come so late, but I've just returned from Egypt, and couldn't get here before tonight. A lady at the hotel told me of this painting at dinner."

The guard pointed sulkily, and went off down the aisle.

Mademoiselle Yvonne paused before the canvas.

No one was now to be seen in the main hall. She glanced about and noted the fact. The two brothers were hidden in the shadows. The young woman stood motionless, and gazed on the only event in her life that counted for anything. She could not believe she saw aright. The scene was correct in every particular—how well she knew it! How often she had recalled it and fondled it in her heart! And yet the years were passing with their changes. She searched for the painter's name—although she knew it could be no other than Alfred Beauvais. The large brass plate on the lower part of the frame escaped her—she was so intent upon the picture. Finally she discovered the modest signature—it was cleverly worked into a skid on the ground made by one of Dante's hoofs when he fell. "A. Beauvais," she spelled out of the artistic groupings of what otherwise seemed to be accidental marks on the earth. Then, after all, Paul cared enough to tell his brother the story.

Paul leaned forward and stared at the vision before him. The dead hopes of years seemed to revive and stir again the dream of his youth. He

forgot surroundings—he did not seem to be on earth. His memory of the girl he had snatched from the runaway was on the canvas, and the original, advanced far beyond the extravagance of his fancy, was there in the flesh, palpitating, warm, breathing, living—more beautiful than he had thought, dignified, prettily human, and the ideal rose of perfect womanhood.

“Go!” exclaimed Alfred in whisper. “For this moment have I created the picture—go!”

Paul had no choice, for Alfred pushed him full into the electric glare.

Yvonne started, but her eyes met his steadily for a minute. A smile of recognition swept swiftly over her features.

Involuntarily they turned to the painting.

Paul was by her side now, and he said, as if reading the title, in a voice that was strange to him: “‘The Story Immortalized!’”

“And you were waiting here for me?”

“Yes; and I’ve been waiting every day since that day.”

She glanced uneasily towards the door.

“Yvonne,” he said, “do you remember that day?”

“I remember.”

“From then until now, I’ve not forgotten. Do you remember our promise?”

“Please, Paul, father makes it impossible.”

“Yvonne!” called a gruff voice, and she slipped her hand from Paul’s and ran out of the hall.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE YELLOW PERIL

FOR several months there had been bickerings between some of the European nations and China and Japan. While Alfred was engaged in painting his masterpiece, which resulted in giving Paul the assurance he needed—that Yvonne still cared—these international troubles were steadily growing. Finally the United States became involved with Japan. England got into a heated controversy with certain rich Rajahs of India. China made grimaces at Russia. What was left of Turkey, the Government of Persia, Afghanistan, and the dozen or more petty states in the East, became turbulent, and made overtures to the larger yellow nations.

Back in 1918 and 1919, statesmen and well-informed citizens had said, and persuaded themselves to believe it, that there could never be another war. The fiasco of Germany had shown the folly of military combats to all peoples everywhere. But how foolish men are when a little time has made memory less acute; for Europe faced the Yellow Peril. The League of Nations, in name only, which was possible of founding by Woodrow Wilson, Lloyd George, and others, following the peace of Paris, had proven as ineffectual in restraint as the bit of paper between Belgium and Germany, at the time

of the breaking out of the world's war. China had become a world power. Progress in that race exceeded that of the Japanese. Her army had been trained by military experts from the West, and, with an eye to the future, she made it her business to form a strong alliance with Japan. Agents of the Chinese Government mingled freely with outlying countries, stirred to the verge of strife, and promised armies and ammunition sufficient to equip the men of military age of the 550,000,000 of population without the border of the Country of Heaven. Differences in religion were buried, and for the first time since the creation of the world, there was great likelihood of a union of the little Yellow Men of the East to the detriment of western civilization. If so, there was a solid population of more than one billion, with unlimited resources, and whereas the great war of 1914 had under arms 30,000,000 of men, the yellow races of the East could easily put into the field 75,000,000 soldiers, most of whom were fatalists; and if this tide should roll westward over Europe, the Great War of 1914, would be out-classed in horrors. The battles of Hindenburg and Foch would become as mere samples of past warfare.

At this moment, the move which everybody had declared for centuries to be impossible, sent a shudder over the world. Less than twenty-five years had elapsed since the Woodrow Wilson peace, and, naturally, one of the powerful nations of Europe still felt disgruntled and out of sorts in that she

believed she had been treated unfairly by the Allied Powers. Resurrecting her diabolical scheme of spies, and the spreading of propaganda, she began to hobnob openly with the yellow diplomats, and to make them promises. When America and the rest of Europe objected, a defiant laugh went up, and the press of the country came out boldly and stated the intentions of the race.

Pacifists began to make pleas for peace—and the brotherhood of man—and Socialists, Democrats and the Bolsheviki showed their heads, and began to mouth with a welt of words: What could be the object of such a war? Competition in commerce—the building of Bagdad railways, the freeing of certain colonies, the settling of old scores, supremacy of the seas, was the quick reply. But why the bloodshed? War is a necessity to the healthy growth of nations was the answer.

Again pacifists vociferated. Newspapers printed hundreds of thousands of columns of editorials against war. But the periodical, in London, called *John Bull*, shocked the fine sentimental senses of civilization by publishing an article headed:

“WHAT THE HELL!”

The import of this unconventional subject, as elaborated upon in plain, red-hot paragraphs, was that the Great East cared absolutely nothing about newspaper preaching. Eastern civilization in the minds of Hindoos, Burmese, Chinese, Japanese, and others was infinitely superior to Western civiliza-

tion, and the little thing of creeping stealthily upon the Caucasian with hooked knife to commit murder, was a delicious treat for which they had been dreaming since the time of Confucius. "DO SOMETHING—OR SHUT UP!" was the closing exhortation of *John Bull's* Editor.

Simultaneously, the press in England and America stopped moralizing, and began to demand action. "How about the International Republic?" they asked.

It is strange how people become more susceptible to idealistic proposals as soon as some terrible disaster is over—or a new one threatens. The Lord understood this weakness in the Jews, and when He wanted them to make a stand for righteousness, His thunderings and lightnings enveloped Mount Sinai. Yes; what had become of the International Republic? Smooth-tongued diplomats blandly replied: "Look ye to our treaties! Has not the League of Understanding, formed after the treaty of Paris in 1919, and the rules laid down in the Hague Conventions, been before you all these years, and become a bulwark for the last quarter or a century? Mark ye the treaties!—many of them with Royal ribbons attached!" *John Bull's* rejoinder made the whole world laugh.

Then the papers asked about the *Beauvais Constitution*. Some remembered it had been printed in every publication in the countries on both sides of the Atlantic. Why had it been neglected? The lead-

ing peoples in all nations—even among the Yellow Men—did not want war. Many said it was an impossibility—just as had been said in July, 1914. Others said if war did break out, it would not last more than sixty days—just as they said in July, 1914. Then one and all began to argue that the International Republic imposed no hardships, did not lessen the greatness of any nation, and was assuredly the only feasible solution to the problem of establishing universal, everlasting peace. Therefore, the thunders of the press sounded again, and the people were urged to awake and save the age from a cataclysm greater, more shocking, more hideous than that of the World War.

Menaces of the Yellow Peril were just what nations required to awaken them. That section of statesmen which always marches under the banner of "The World is Good Enough" was badly handled by the public. They were told to keep out of the fight. The men who paid taxes; women who had given up sons to armies, cried for a hearing. Huge petitions to parliaments and congresses were circulated. The solid majority of good citizens in Germany, France, England, and the Americas, in these petitions, asked their governments to appoint delegates to an international convention to formulate a constitution, and organize a powerful international union. It was all done in a remarkably brief time. Congressmen, Members of Parliament, Members of the Reichstag, Deputies to the Chamber, in con-

siderable numbers, opposed the scheme—as might be expected of humanity,—and by means of much speaking and loud outbursts of pettifogging knowledge, divided opinion somewhat. However, the rising flood of popular approval of some scheme of international protection began to sway the steel standards of antiquated civilization.

In the furor of this upheaval for common weal and protection, the French election of Deputies fell due. One of the issues—and the most important one—was the question of deciding whether or not France would become a member of the International Republic, which certain statesmen throughout the world were advocating; provided, of course, a union satisfactory to all could be perfected. The people of France must express themselves in the election of Deputies.

This divided the candidates into Internationalists and Anti-Internationalists. If the former were elected in majority, delegates would be appointed to the great convention. To enliven the contest, many subterfuges were resorted to, and, as a result, the most interesting campaign in French politics started in with more than the usual enthusiasm.

In the Ste. Genevieve district of the Oise, M. Pierre de Robincourt announced himself for re-election to the Chamber of Deputies, as an Anti-Internationalist. He denounced the scheme as an attempt on the part of Socialists and Bolsheviki

Idealists to rob nations of their sovereignties. He wrote articles to French papers—also to England and America,—urging that Western civilization fly to arms and crush the little Yellow Men and the East before they could taste of white men's blood. Right in the beginning, before his opponent had been selected, de Robincourt took the public platform in his district, and started in to educate his electors in his time-honored theories.

But people everywhere were thinking independently—and reading every line on the subject they could obtain. France was not the only country in which Internationalism was becoming the absorbing topic. The spring elections in England were coming off, and member after member was being returned to the House of Commons, pledged to vote for the broader idea of government. Part of Germany, despite the efforts of militarists not yet quite dead, had voted in favor of international union. Canada and the English colonies loyally supported the best opinion in the Mother Country, and declared they were in favor of a great convention to create international protection for mankind. Even Japan was infested with international agitators.

Therefore, M. de Robincourt's constituents listened to him—many of them impatiently, and began to cast about for an able Internationalist to defeat the old "mossback." It was inevitable that the public choice should fall on M. Paul Beauvais, author of the now famous Constitution. Was not

the name of Beauvais on the lips of the world? Did the people everywhere not cry for the Beauvais scheme? They did not know the modest young man, and it did not matter to nations whether he were a peasant or prince—the big idea was the thing of magnetic interest. In fact, few paused to consider the author—they clamored for the realization of his conception, but it would be ill-becoming the gratitude of Frenchmen in Paul Beauvais' home district to overlook him.

Farseeing men in the city of Ste. Genevieve, headed by Dr. Anson Joumonville, had planned in advance. His property qualifications were attended to before the need was apparent, and every avenue patrolled, looking to his successful entry into the political field. Accordingly when the "seer" de Robincourt began to mingle with the voters, trying to forestall opposition, a delegation waited on Paul Beauvais, and requested him to accept the nomination. The important district of Northern France with its factories and mines—always a prey to invading armies—must make a stand for the International Republic. The Committee offered the strongest support that had ever been arrayed against M. Pierre de Robincourt.

This group of leading citizens found Paul Beauvais absorbed in the office of Lederfrank, Beauvais & Co., endeavoring still to bring his father out of the complicated muddle. At the moment they entered, he was engaged with his father in checking

up the credits of the firm, and the young man looked surprised when ten prominent and influential men strode into the main office, each wearing a badge labelled "Internationalism." As much as he would have liked, Paul had not attended any of their meetings. He was convinced he had found a clue to all his father's troubles in the firm, and worked away to prove it to M. Raoul Beauvais, who was more obstinate than ever in his dislike for the invader's son. Hence Paul did not know of the concerted action of his friends to put him at the head of the ticket against the invincible de Robincourt. Neither Lederfrank nor Raoul Beauvais knew of it—and the Internationalists had worked so secretly and effectually that old de Robincourt himself was ignorant of the danger that threatened his seat, now become to him the pride of his old age.

Raoul Beauvais, Jacob Lederfrank, and Paul Beauvais involuntarily arose to their feet, not knowing what to do, much less what to expect. Politics had never been considered in their offices, and to be suddenly approached by the outer world, certainly was ominous, if not the forerunner of something unusual.

Dr. Anson Jumonville acted as spokesman. He knew his task well; had foreseen the difficulties of persuading Paul to take his hand from the business; and, consequently, came prepared to put up the strongest case of which his keen and trained intellect was capable. When he had finished, the three men

of commerce saw the drift of the situation. Lederfrank and Beauvais looked at Paul as much as to say, "There is nothing else for you to do."

Paul was rapidly turning eventualities in his mind, and became preoccupied.

"It's business that hinders you, Paul," said Dr. Jumonville. "You must put France above business. Your country calls you."

The younger Beauvais straightened himself, and said, without hesitation :

"Gentlemen, I accept the honor, and pledge myself to undertake the duties imposed."

CHAPTER XXV

THE CAMPAIGN

WHEN Paul Beauvais had once turned himself from the routine of business, and surveyed carefully the world situation—the need he had proclaimed so urgently in Queen's Hall, London, now emphasized by the mutterings of Moslems, Brahmins, Buddhists, and Confucianists,—he arose magnanimously to the occasion. He abandoned office duties reluctantly, but once the opportunity of France beckoned to him, he threw into the balances his mind and heart, and bared his breast for the fight.

It would be no easy matter to defeat M. Pierre de Robincourt. While the old Deputy was out-of-date, ultra-conservative, and opposed to all new things; he was rich, a born diplomat, pleasing when he wanted to be elected, and, worst of all, subtly vindictive. His rugged appearance, *distingué* demeanor, and powerful directness, appealed to the French mind. He was also an orator, a statesman of the old school, and made it his religion to know every man, woman, child, and dog in the prosperous district.

Paul Beauvais, the fledgling of modernism, faced his opponent and measured his power.

There was in it, too, the delicate handicap of love, for since the night in Paris, before "The Story

Immortalized," Paul's love for Mademoiselle Yvonne had again awakened to hold him in a state of ecstasy. He saw her in everything—the flowers, the trees, the dull papers in the office, in the dank darkness of the mines, in the constellations of the Heavens; and he heard her voice by day and by night;—a music sweeter than the harp. She was to him the gem of perfection—the inspiration of his genius. Had he not studied by her light? Had he not delivered the Queen's Hall speech while an imaginary image of her danced over the audience? Was he not living by the current flowing from her heart beats? And yet he must go to battle with her father. Whom would she support?—there is but one course for a French girl: she must be loyal to her father. Paul Beauvais knew he had to win the election over two opponents instead of one.

The news of Paul Beauvais' acceptance came to M. de Robincourt at once. He laughed at first, but gradually his visage settled down to a hardened frown.

"Yvonne!" he called like the boom of a cannon.

"Yes, father."

"Come here!"

"What may I do?"

"H'm—that lover of yours! That modern duckling you have been pleading for!—your model of manhood."

"Well?"

"He has accepted the nomination against me,

H'm! he's a diplomatic suitor for my daughter's hand."

"Paul Beauvais is running against you, father?"

"Yes!" This "yes" was snapped out like an April peal of thunder. Yvonne, however, did not mind. She knew Pierre de Robincourt better than he knew himself. He was as ferocious as a hyena, but she could wind him about her finger.

"I'm sorry," she said, as a pallid seriousness came over her face.

"He'll be sorry, too. If he hopes to defeat me, I'll show him that the voters of France can distinguish between chaff and the real grain."

"Don't boast, father."

"Boast! Why, I'm merely stating a fact. Do you suppose the intelligent men of this district are going to turn me down after twenty-five years of service in the Chamber for a youth who is proclaiming a fanciful comity of nations?"

"No! Not if I can prevent it."

"Ah, I knew my Yvonne—she's the chip off her father's block!"

"Of course, I'll work for you. I shall go with you to every meeting. I shall speak myself."

"Good!"

"But, papa, you've an antagonist this time."

"*Sacré!* I know it."

"You've never had such an able candidate from the opposition—face it, acknowledge it, and you and I can work the better."

"It's true."

"Now, then, I love Paul Beauvais with all my heart. I shall never cease to beg you for him, but he has drawn swords with my father—and he's wrong. I don't believe in his politics. Nationalities were meant to be separate. France could never consent to become neutralized in a hodgepodge of races. I shall stand by you throughout. It is my privilege—it will also be my delight. I shall work only the harder, in order that I may assist in convincing Paul, by overwhelming defeat—and the majorities in France, England, and the United States,—that he's wrong. You must be elected by a majority of not less than 2,500 votes. I'm glad women, in France, now have the right to take an active part in politics. I believe we shall soon be entitled to vote—as they do in other countries. Anyway, I can do my share of your campaigning."

"It'll be easy, Yvonne—easy!"

"Work with the idea it will be difficult—why, think of the shame of your being defeated, father? It must not happen!"

That same evening, after the ringing of the vesper bells, Hermance and her son, Paul, walked hand in hand to St. Joseph's, and there kneeling before the altar, asked the Mighty Lord of Hosts to give Paul wisdom and power, and to bless his fight for universal peace. As they returned over the High Bridge, they lingered for a moment as if loath to go in out of the balmy night. Stars were scattered

lavishly throughout the Heavens, and the stillness of rest held nature in its grip. They were thoughtful after their visit to the shrine. Paul asked:

"And Yvonne—what will she do, mother?"

"She's a woman of France. If she believes her father's views are best for France, she will do battle against you, even though it wrenches her heart at every turn."

"I know—I know. I wouldn't have it otherwise," he said in resignation.

"Do you know her views?"

"Yes, mother. After my speech, she wrote me."

"And she differs?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, prepare for the bitterest political campaign that has ever occurred on the Oise. Yvonne, my son, will stand by her father. Because of her love for you, she'll work only the harder, that her father might be satisfied. If she did not do her duty, Paul, she would not be worthy of you."

Thus the lines were drawn. The storm did not begin with a few pattering drops. The other parts of the world were already seething in the thick of the boiling whirlpool. The flood-gates were down, and Ste. Genevieve caught the crest of the angry current. The rush of the waters of passion and feeling, of sentiment and patriotism, filled the land. The young giant and the old giant waded out and crossed swords.

The day after Paul Beauvais' nomination, Pierre de Robincourt distributed thousands of handbills, which read:

SANITY VS. INSANITY

SAVE FRANCE FROM BOLD CONFISCATION

Internationalism Means

No France.

VOTE

For M. PIERRE DE ROBIN COURT,
Whose Record of Twenty-five Years

Is a Guaranty

Against Maudlin Beauvaisism!

VIVE LA FRANCE!

These beginning words were printed on large squares of white book paper, and scattered broadcast over the district. After at least two had been provided for each household, others were pasted on carts, automobiles, fences, bridges, trees, sidewalks, and house gables, and about sundown, a bill-scattering biplane sowed a stream of them from Ste. Genevieve to Hirson and on to Avesnes.

By noon the next day, Paul Beauvais issued his reply. Book paper was not considered, but the various presses issued squares of ordinary paper of a bright red color, on which was printed:

PEACE VS. BLOODSHED

SAVE FRANCE FROM PAGAN INVASIONS!

Internationalism and
The International Republic Mean
Security and Prosperity—

ROBINCOURTISM
Leaves the Gates Open for Repetitions
of Louvain and Rheims!

VOTE

For M. PAUL BEAUVAIS,
The Advocate of Greater Freedom for
Frenchmen and a Guaranty
AGAINST WARS!

VIVE LA FRANCE!

At high noon, a small airship, painted yellow for the occasion, darted zigzag across the heavens, spouting a stream of red. Men shaded their eyes and looked. They cried:

“THE YELLOW PERIL AND BLOOD!”

The first public speech was delivered in Ste. Geneveive by M. de Robincourt, who invaded the home precinct of M. Paul Beauvais to lead the attack. Yvonne sat on the rostrum with her father, and cheered him while he opened his campaign for the old régime. The great town hall was packed

with men and women, eager to hear every word that was said. The majestic old man, noted for his one hour speeches, stirred them with his patriotic oratory, and the spectacle of the beautiful heiress of Northern France on the platform to support her father, sent a wave of approving admiration through the audience. Wives said to their husbands: "How sweet of her to come with her old father!" The young men applauded the louder in order to win her smiles! There were shouts of "Hurrah! for the Tiger of Champagne."

Paul Beauvais was there, consuming every word that his opponent roared into the ears of the people. He did not wince under the scorching volley aimed at his head. Then came the challenge in de Robincourt's closing remarks.

"My opponent is invited to answer me. Let him dare to tell the electors that France will benefit by his modernisms."

His young opponent did dare. He had come only to listen, but he was not afraid to debate with the Seer of the Oise. While French enthusiasm shook the building, Paul Beauvais walked up the main aisle, and mounted to the speaker's stand. He bowed to de Robincourt and his daughter, and then greeted the tempestuous crowd.

This move tickled the public imagination. For ten minutes the uproar was continuous. Then the expectant hush came.

Beauvais' reply to de Robincourt also lasted an

hour. No statement in the former's speech was left unnoticed. The dash and go of the young orator was in striking contrast to the volume of ponderous weight of the old one. Hackneyed legislative formulas seemed to have emerged from a dip in the fountain of perpetual youth. The blunt charges of de Robincourt were parried with polished, scholarly refutations, and in the blank left by the removal, the virile seeds of progress were sown. Where de Robincourt stepped aside to drop vindictive personal remarks, Beauvais disdaining to repay in kind, told amusing stories that met the situations and made the people laugh. His peroration was brilliant, pithy, pregnant with condensed gems of argument, and absolutely convincing.

Thus ended the first debate. There was no gain to either side—except that of becoming acquainted. No one felt that either side had fallen short. It was a draw in well-defined contrast. The neglected art of oratory would doubtless play a prominent part in the campaign, but it would also be a battle of the strong.

Mademoiselle Yvonne was quick to see the enlivened interest of the audience. While holding affectionately to the "Tiger of Champagne," the voters seemed to be on the point of letting go with one hand to grasp the newer and more dazzling prize; thinking men were unconsciously reverting in their minds from one to the other, trying to make a choice. Before the meeting was over, she seized

the psychological moment to divert attention. Tripping to the footlights, she said:

"As the assistant manager of my father's candidacy, I am authorized to propose to the opposition, joint debates throughout the campaign. The issue before France and the world is of far-reaching, vital importance, and in this district, people should hear both sides of all questions fairly presented by the principals. If this is agreeable to M. Paul Beauvais, the series of appointments may be arranged. I await his prompt decision."

Loud applause again filled the auditorium. Paul Beauvais lost no time in responding. Smiling merrily, with a twinkle in his eyes, he said:

"In absence of my assistant manager, my mother, I accept the challenge."

The great folding doors were thrown open, as the enthusiastic, cheering multitudes poured into the streets, gesticulating and talking,—"*très bien!*" and "*excellent!*" rising frequently above the din. Swift motor carriages bore part of them away. Some went off down the sidewalks in groups of twos and threes, and others turned into the narrow side passages. They went to châteaux on hills and plains, and to cottages and hovels, to ponder the double statement of the proposition.

At midnight there were still echoes of the first meeting in the arena. In the *Café Joffre*, two old cronies sipped their *bière blonde*, and discussed the speeches.

"A lively bout, Jean Ferrier, I'm thinking—and the pretty Mademoiselle besides!"

"*N'est-ce pas?*" Francois Dubonet pulled his imperial and shrugged his shoulders.

"I put money on the lad," said Jean.

"He'll never last under the sledge-hammer blows of Pierre de Robincourt."

"I knew you'd be for the old man—shame on you, Dubonet!"

"I've been voting for him too long. He's a safe Deputy. This new idea may be all right, but I'm not one for trying experiments with France."

"I can't follow your thought. The International Republic has only to do with speeches that concern all nations—it does not take away liberties of individual nations."

"That's just it, Jean. The book is clean to start with—the few entries on the first pages may look very inviting,—but the blank pages after; that's where the danger lies—what comes after. Once France is mixed up in this,—well, no one can see the end. Why, this may be the work of Germany. Who can say to me, knowledge of such things does not originate in Teutonic brains. Beware, Jean, beware! France has come out of many hard wars, and I shall not be for sinking her glorious past into a puddle where all the frogs croak the same! Aloofness is a nation's biggest cannon."

Down on the river front, about the same hour, a

half dozen rough fellows were playing cards in the freight house.

"Fine speech the old Deputy made," said Jules who was dealing the cards.

"*Ah, oui!*" came from the other five. "Fine old man," continued one of them. "He'll likely get our increase in wages this time—he almost did it before, but the men like M. Raoul Beauvais interfered. I heard de Robincourt and Beauvais quarrelled over that bill."

"Oh, well," said Jules again—"the old Deputy can count on our votes."

At the Club of Picardy, nearly fifty young men were discussing the speeches, and the several merits of the candidates. The arguments went on to well after one o'clock, and the taking of a straw vote revealed the fact that there were forty-four votes for Beauvais, three for de Robincourt, and four who would not commit themselves. They had not been in the discussion, and preferred to see more of the campaign.

"Mother, this is going to be a hard fought campaign," said M. Paul Beauvais, on reaching the Château Morestier. He then related what had transpired, and his mother became much excited.

"I do wish I had gone. It never occurred to me very much would happen tonight. Oh, it was fine for you to announce that I'm your assistant manager! Of course, everyone knows Dr. Joumonville is managing your campaign, but I can work for

you, too—since Yvonne works for her father. I'll go out and counteract the work of Mademoiselle. It's fair, my son—woman against woman!"

As the de Robincourt motor carriage glided along through the Forest, the following conversation took place:

"That young fellow has plenty of audacity!"

"Yes, papa!"

"Good speech."

"Yes."

"My undertaking will be lively."

"Yes."

"I can wipe him out though."

"Don't boast, papa."

"Yvonne, he can get down on his knees and study statesmanship under me for ten years—with profit."

"But in the end?"

"Yes, the young devil would probably be wiser than I."

"That's it, that's it."

"Oh, I've respect for his intellect."

"The family is well endowed."

"All have brains, Yvonne. My money is paying for them, too!" I only found out today that the painting you had me buy, "The Story Immortalized," came to just seven thousand francs, more than the highest offer from others!"

"But the painting is worth what we paid."

"Yes, yes; still if I'm defeated by this ideal of yours, what then?"

"Oh, don't talk defeat, papa. You shall not be defeated. I could not endure it. You must win. I shall put forth every effort to see you re-elected."

"I know. Never fear. Why, Yvonne, I could defeat the boy without delivering a speech, but now that you put me in for it, I'll wipe him off the earth. He'll go to America, or South Africa, when I finish."

"Boasting again, papa. You'll win, of course, but you'll have something to do. You went prepared with your speech. He followed you making his speech as he went. You've challenged a young giant."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE EDDIES

IMMEDIATELY, the political contest became involved in unrelenting attacks, no mercy was shown on either side. Mademoiselle Yvonne and Madame Beauvais were out daily in their automobiles, electioneering and taking a census of the voters. At the end of the first two weeks, this record was completed. It stood: 4,598 pledged tentatively for de Robincourt; 4,321 pledged to Beauvais, and 11,980 non-committal electors. That was astounding. It meant work of the cleverest kind. The eleven thousand were not disinterested—but the contrary, and the public debates were largely attended by this unknown majority.

In the meantime, M. Paul Beauvais had devoted some attention to the business. His father, still struggling in the murkiness of dislike and jealousy, resented this return to keep an eye on the affairs. He had hoped that Paul would be buried in politics, from which he could never extricate himself. Raoul hoped the Invader's Son would be taken out of the way—as far as the firm of Lederfrank, Beauvais & Company was concerned; but Paul was too much like a bull-dog—he never let up on anything. The political battles he fought with M. Pierre de Robincourt sharpened his mind, and opened avenues of

thought that were previously dormant. The violent exercise also put more steel and determination in the young man. It made him begin to hate defeat as if it were a great disgrace, and had put in him a sternness and certainty of purpose. His demeanor, his appearance, his method of thought, his system of thinking, his combativeness—all seemed to have undergone a change. He walked upright, maintained an air about him of self-reliance, and there was a sense of seriousness emanating from him that compelled people to respect him. Old de Robincourt's savage speeches were prodding him into full development.

On one of these occasional visits to the offices, Raoul Beauvais alone in his private room, looked out and saw Paul approaching. His step was quick, and his head held well up—he was a fine specimen of manhood, clean-cut, handsome, powerful in physique, a firm mouth, clear, unquailing blue eyes, and evidences of force exuding from every movement, and, on that particular morning, he seemed prepared to wade into a whole regiment of scoundrels.

"Just like a damned German!" Raoul said to himself, as he felt a shiver of a wave of hate. "To think my sons are going into the arts, and leave me to be trampled on by this invader! Bah!"

Paul came right on into the private office. He spoke pleasantly, hung up his hat, twisted his moustache, and came over to his father's desk.

"See here, papa, I've worked out these credits. I've arranged for the financing of all your difficulties. It issues from Messrs. Dupuy, Longren & Defresnes, Paris. Here's the credit allowance."

He drew the document from his pocket and threw it before the sulking man. There was something about Paul's manner which always saved him from personal affront from Raoul. The now gray-haired, stooped, drawn-faced business victim had a queer feeling when Paul was near—would he use force, this terrible young man? Would he have his own way in spite of insults? He didn't seem to pay any more attention to the insults that Raoul heaped upon him than he did to the barking of strayed dogs.

"This just pulls the business through. On those contracts from America, you are coming out even, when the firm should have made large profits. I don't understand it—it seems to me a funny piece of business altogether, but it is now done. Besides, the factory is modernized, and if you will manage these credits properly, you can eventually pay out for the machinery, and re-establish sound business."

M. Beauvais had commercial sense enough to give the young man a grateful look. Paul had accomplished something which had worried the firm for over a year, and, besides, he had brought the business out of the tangle of the five-year contracts with American firms by providing the credits to complete the last allotments of deliveries. This manoeuvre

had made daylight dawn over the troubled waters, so that steering forward could be more certain, and the elder Beauvais thought he could see a way out to success.

"Now, where is M. Lederfrank?" asked Paul, taking no notice of the man who stood before him saying nothing.

"In the shipping office."

Paul called him over the house telephone.

Lederfrank came in, looking rather anxious, for he and Beauvais were having some stormy conferences of late over the imminent embarrassment of the firm. He glanced quickly at Paul on entering the private office.

"M. Lederfrank, I've arranged the necessary credits to bring the business out of this crisis," eyeing the Jew closely.

"Is it sufficient?"

"More than sufficient."

"H'm!"

"Father admitted to me last week, M. Lederfrank, that you wished to purchase his shares."

"I told him casually if he were tired of the drag of the business, since I had originally got him into it, I would buy him out on the basis of our contract."

"How is it the contract—I required father to show it to me,—provides that only you could buy out your partner?"

Lederfrank did not answer at once. He liked

Paul, but of late he felt uncomfortable in his presence—he was “so nose-y!” the Jew had written to Count von Essenhendel.

“Oh, that’s simple enough—I—it’s because I loaned the money to your father to start the business.”

“I can’t have this discussion,” declared Raoul Beauvais, springing to his feet.

Paul shot a look at his father, which caused him to settle down in his chair.

“Yes, yes; I know that,” said Paul, “but since it was paid back years ago, don’t you think it fair that father should have equal privileges with you? You have been friends all these years, and you wouldn’t take advantage now, would you?”

“Certainly he should have the same rights that I enjoy.”

Lederfrank seemed a little upset. Paul looked him through, and crowded close up to him.

“I believe you told me, when I came into the firm, it was for my sake you had been helping father.”

“Yes.”

“Well, then, Lederfrank, for my sake you’ll give my father the right to purchase your shares, if he can raise the money.”

Raoul Beauvais looked on in astonishment.

Lederfrank felt he could hedge by taking his usual week to think it over. Ever since he had been in the business, when anything of moment came up, he always took a week to reflect—in reality to write

to the Count. Paul had noted the peculiar practice, and was determined to forestall it.

"Here's the option on your share for a year, M. Lederfrank; sign on this line."

"I must think it over for about a week."

"Why you've just agreed it's right. Sign it!"

"I would much prefer——"

Paul was thrusting the pen in his hand.

"I prefer, sir, that you do what you say is right, and do it now! If you hesitate, I'll think you have somebody in partnership on your shares."

The shock of this suggested charge set Lederfrank to writing, and before he intended to do it, signed the option. The next moment he was in his own private office, trying to tear his hair.

"Papa," said Paul, "take this option. You can now hold your own. When the election is over, I'll see about arranging to buy up those shares. I believe M. Dupuy and his group will take them. Raoul Beauvais took the option, and managed to say grudgingly: "Good piece of business, my——" Enthusiasm over seeing the light again almost betrayed him into saying "son," but he stopped in time. Paul walked out, and promptly lapsed into political ruminations.

In due course, the Count von Essenhendel received the following letter:

"My dear Count,

"I have made the business mistake of my career. I am undone. That son of

yours got me into a corner and forced me to give him an option on your shares for one year, at par. I cannot cope with this fellow. He is not offensive, but he has more brains than the rest of us. Advise me.

"Yours faithfully,

"Jacob Lederfrank."

"Read it! read it!" roared the Count, bounding into Dr. Badenheim's office.

"Yes; I see it—your son, dear Count. Can you blame him?"

The Count was too much out of breath to reply.

"I also have a letter from Lederfrank."

"So!"

"Yes."

"Well what is it?" The Count's temper flared.

"That son of yours has financed the last installments of our deliveries, which clears the business."

"No!" shouted the Count.

"Yes, I said."

"And all of our schemes have fallen to earth!"

"Yes."

"I can't have it!"

"But you mean for Paul to have the business?"

"Yes! damn it!"

"Let him get it himself—what's the good of all this flurry? Why do you want to fume over it!"

"You don't know me! Yes, Paul is to have the business, but he must receive it at my hands. He

must acknowledge me as his father—his overlord.”

“Oh! are you still as crazy as the Junkers of 1914? Acknowledge you as overlord! There is no lord to a man of brains. Remember, Count, he’s your son. Why trouble!”

“Trouble! trouble! I’ll humble him!”

“How?”

“You’ve been slack on those credits. I told you to look out. Shut up every avenue—shut them tight! Ruin the business, if there is no other way.”

“It is insane! You’ll hurt Paul!”

“It’s the German way—never be conquered!”

“Yes; it was the German way in the World War. They pleaded God on their side, and the Kaiser as a partner with Christ. They even had *Gott mit uns*, engraved on their belts.”

Then there was an exchange of cashiers between the *Banque Centrale*, of Ste. Genevieve, and the *Credit Berliner*, of Paris. Edouard Raymond went to Paris, and Otto von Eisenhendel came to Ste. Genevieve.

The obliging President of the *Banque Centrale* made it a point to introduce the fair young German in a series of dinners, at his home, and at the clubs. The personality of young von Eisenhendel was commanding and pleasing, and he came highly recommended from Paris. In banking centers, the wealth and influence of Count Frederick Wilhelm von Eisenhendel was well known, and his son must be recognized, for he not only had the backing of the

Essenhendel millions, but he was himself a most capable banker, and a gentleman of likable traits.

At a function at President d'Artourage's château, Herr Otto von Essenhendel met most of the popular young ladies of the city.

"Oh, mamma!" Marie exclaimed, drawing the busy assistant campaign manager to one side, "I met, at M. d'Artourage's, just the nicest young man! He's about the same size as Paul—only he's a blond."

"Yes, Marie. Who is he?"

"He's the new cashier at the *Banque Centrale*. M. d'Artourage says he's a nice young man."

"What's his name?"

"Von Essenhendel. Otto von Essenhendel."

The mother looked startled, and drew back as if she had been struck in the face.

"Why, mamma!"

"A German, my daughter!"

"But I like him, mamma. I know he's German, but people can't always be hating people."

"You must not like him, Marie!" the mother said hoarsely—to have you love a German would spoil my happiness, and your father would lose his mind."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ELECTION

"PAPA, do be quiet. You mustn't be walking in the halls so much. If you do, you may not be able to meet Paul in Hirson tonight."

"Don't talk nonsense, Yvonne."

"But if you are ill?"

"Ill! I'm not ill."

"My dear papa, you are ill. Please go to bed. I promise to call you in time."

"I can't sleep. I must think out the speech you have written for me."

"I wrote it?"

"Yes; I know you wrote it for me to deliver. Is that acknowledgment enough?"

"Oh, the speech is all right. Let me put you to bed."

With the valet's assistance, Mademoiselle Yvonne succeeded in getting the old tiger to bed. For the last three weeks of the campaign, he had worried and fretted. The vitality of the younger man was too much for him. He tried to quarrel with M. Paul Beauvais, but it was of no use— Beauvais paid no attention. The last four speeches had been written out for him by Yvonne, and he had got on better, but his age was telling on him. The last speech, the one on the night before election, was

to be the most important of all, and ten thousand people would be in the hall at Hirson. Therefore, it was important that de Robincourt should be well and at his best. Mademoiselle Yvonne saw him close his eyes in sleep, and left the room to seek her mother.

"Mamma, send for the doctor at once. We must have papa well for tonight. It would never do for him to miss being at that last debate. He lost considerable ground in those seven speeches in the country, where he got angry—because M. Paul Beauvais wouldn't get angry,—but in the last speeches, he has come off better."

"I have already sent for the doctor, Yvonne."

"Of course, I knew you would."

"Yvonne, you're excited. Your father will be all right."

"But so much depends."

"One speech couldn't matter."

"It could. The best I can estimate, the electoral vote is about evenly divided. It may not matter, as you say, but if father gained large additions to his following tonight—fifty votes, one hundred votes,—it is very important that this speech be delivered."

The Doctor came, and said it was impossible for M. de Robincourt to keep his last appointment. By taking complete rest, he might be able to spend election day among his constituents, but he could not go to Hirson.

The valet had to lock the door and refuse to give the old statesman his clothes. Finally Made-moiselle Yvonne was appealed to, and she talked the old fellow into giving up so as to be on hand for the all-important day.

"Of course, if I'm not there, M. Paul Beauvais will not speak," M. de Robincourt was saying drowsily, as the Doctor's medicine began to take effect. "He's a gentleman. He didn't get angry at me when I tried to make him—I'm sure——"

That was as far as he got. Yvonne watched him until his breathing became regular. While her mother was smoothing the bedclothes, the daughter brushed back the gray locks, kissed the grand old man's forehead, and hurried to dress for the evening.

In less than an hour, the big de Robincourt car was headed for Hirson. The chauffeur was instructed to drive madly, for the time was very short. The long black body of the 100 horse-power motor squatted close to the ground, and darted forward like a huge beetle. The only occupant was Made-moiselle Yvonne.

Behind the scenes in the Apollo Theatre, at Hirson, M. de Robincourt's campaign manager, M. Henri Valois, was walking the floor in a nervous state. M. de Robincourt was ill! No word from him!—and ten thousand people waiting for the message. They were already impatient. M. Paul Beauvais and his full escort were sitting on the speaker's stand. What was to be done?

"Ah!" he exclaimed at the sight of Mademoiselle Yvonne entering the side door. "And your father?"

"He's too ill to attend," said the flushed, determined girl.

"*Mon Dieu!* what shall we do? The people!—they wait, Mademoiselle!"

"It's just the hour," she replied, removing her motor veil.

"Shall I call Dr. Joumonville? He may agree to cancel the debate."

"No!" Yvonne said determinedly—"would you ask quarter of the opposition?—NEVER!"

"But what—?—"

"I shall speak, sir," she said, her black eyes flashing.

"*Mon Dieu!*—but——!"

Mademoiselle Yvonne de Robincourt swept past him, and went to the front of the stand. She courtesied to the opposition, and then greeted the sea of faces.

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—My father is unable to attend the meeting on account of illness, and with the permission of the opposing candidate, I shall speak in M. de Robincourt's behalf."

The beautiful young woman turned to M. Paul Beauvais, and waited for his decision.

"My permission is given, Mademoiselle Yvonne," said Paul without hesitation.

At the end of an hour and a half, Mademoiselle Yvonne yielded the floor. The deafening buzz that

came up from the crowd was ample evidence that she had pleased the people. M. Paul Beauvais would have said it was the best speech of the campaign. He was sure she had won five hundred votes. Never had he been so tactfully and mercilessly catechized to the audience.

Dr. Joumonville fidgeted in his chair.

"Paul, I must. It would never do for you to reply to that speech," his mother was saying.

"But, Madame, think!—think!" Dr. Joumonville said.

"I'm thinking. I've been thinking ever since the campaign opened. It is my time to speak. Mademoiselle Yvonne de Robincourt cannot object to my son's assistant manager, I'm sure, and I crave permission to reply to her," Madame Beauvais said sweetly, as she took up her position on the rostrum.

"Certainly the lady must speak," she heard Mademoiselle say, without looking in her direction.

The audience went into a pandemonium of applause. The occasion was unusual, and the people were quite prepared to hear the mother's defense.

And that defense was ably delivered. Men who had heard M. Paul Beauvais night after night, listened to his mother with sympathetic interest. They recognized in her the talents Paul had inherited. On every hand, it was whispered: "It is no wonder the son is a great man!" When she had finished, honors were as nearly even as could be. She replied to the clever, polite attacks on her son

with the ardor of one woman against another, but without becoming personal. Her illustrations were none the less original than those of the beautiful heiress; the imperialistic theories of the latter were overshadowed by the catchy, heart-appealing exposition of the boon of universal peace. Madame Hermance Beauvais' portrayal of the imaginary invasion of France by the Yellow Men of the East was so realistic that women sobbed in the galleries. Her closing sentence was: "Vote for the man who will stand in the Chamber of Deputies and lead France to an indissoluble union!"

The morrow was a fair day. With the rising of the sun, men began to move towards places of voting. Political workers hurried here and there to make sure nothing had been overlooked. Local speakers harangued small knots of men on the commons. Never before had that part of France witnessed such an exciting campaign. Feeling in some sections ran high. Labor and Socialist agitators in Hirson and other manufacturing districts, circulated the report that Beauvais was against the toiler, the artisan, the mechanic, and they could not expect his support for laws calculated to benefit those classes. By two o'clock in the afternoon, parades were traversing streets in the towns and villages, bearing banners with all sorts of inscriptions, and in and out the excited throngs, Madame Beauvais and Mademoiselle Yvonne went, ceaselessly talking and arguing for their respective candidates.

The grizzly Seer of the Oise, who had earned the title—as well as that of the Tiger of Champagne—by pronouncing continuous prophecies of France's coming greatness, and attempting to thrust them upon the people, aroused himself at five o'clock in the morning, and would have beaten his valet had that frightened servant not produced his clothes at once. Mademoiselle Yvonne heard the storming, and would have come to the valet's assistance, but there were notes in her father's voice which told her she had better keep out. It was evident M. de Robincourt's strength had returned, and he was on the war path for the election. After breakfast, he and Mademoiselle Yvonne left in the car, aiming to call at every important center of voting. But he was irritable, and soon got into another car, leaving his daughter to electioneer in her own way. Hence it happened that she went about most of the time unattended.

By one o'clock in the afternoon, everything was in full swing. The grotesqueness of elections in England and America was revived to embellish the oddities of the French, and resulted in an unusual display of the spectacular. Everyone considered himself a plenipotentiary for France.

Late in the day, in Hirson, Mademoiselle Yvonne observed the gendarmes hurrying through the streets.

"What is the disturbance?" she asked of a man on the corner.

"The factory hands have attacked M. Beauvais' car."

She ordered her chauffeur to dash to the scene. When she arrived, more than three hundred misguided mechanics were being charged by the police. They had surrounded the automobile of M. Paul Beauvais, and struck him down with a club. Dr. Joumonville was with him, and dressed the wound inflicted on the outraged candidate. When Mademoiselle Yvonne's car came to a stop, M. de Robincourt's touring motor whisked in from a side street. Instantly the old Deputy was recognized, and the cry went up: "Behold our hero!"

Mademoiselle Yvonne stood on the seat, and made signs for silence.

"Shame!" she cried, anger written on every feature.

"Shame! men of France; this is dishonorable!—it is a crime!"

In the hush, a propitiatory voice answered:

"Ah, Mademoiselle, we want your father!"

"You will never get my father by attempting to murder his opponent. If father were elected under such circumstances, he would immediately resign. Shame! Disperse! or I shall command the police to fire at you. If you elect my father by such behavior, I vow he'll never fill the seat. Go home every one of you!"

The Deputy's bellowing voice sounded. "My daughter is right—you shall not—you shall not

elect me and be guilty of such violence! I'll not have it, you scoundrels! I would resign tomorrow, if I thought one of your votes aided me. France disowns you as her sons. What dwarfed-soul agitator inflamed you with lies? M. Beauvais is far more friendly to the laboring man than I—he'll do more for you. Get out! or the gendarmes will take you."

Stocks and paving stones were dropped, and the men and boys in the rabble hung their heads and sneaked away. Beauvais' car moved off slowly with Paul towards the Château Morestier, and Made-moiselle Yvonne went in search of Madame Beauvais.

Wildest rumors gained credence, and people stood about the streets, shouting and gesticulating. But it did not matter what was said. The deeds of the day were already recorded—the votes were cast, the last man persuaded, the last woman had pleaded with her husband to vote for peace. The polls were closed, and darkness ended the strife.

In the public square in Ste. Genevieve, a large electric board had been erected to announce the election returns. Hours before the first countings began to arrive, thousands of men and women were waiting in the open, casting anxious glances at the dark object set on a tripod fifty feet above the tallest building facing the square. The hum of small talk in French, interpolated with "*oui, oui*" and "*n'est-ce pas,*" floated up soothingly from the drab-colored

mass, and the chimes in a nearby church steeple spun out quarter hours.

An arc light sputtered, and after going down several times, burned brilliantly, shedding its dazzling flood over a section of the crowd. In the jam thus revealed, two big automobiles were wedged in side by side.

"Oh, I'm so glad!—— Papa, papa, here's M. Paul Beauvais next to us! Are you badly hurt?"

"No, no, thank you. It was a heavy blow on the head, but I seem to be all right now."

"I'm so glad!—so pleased to see you out again!" said Mademoiselle Yvonne.

"Election Returns!" flashed across the great board.

Half-said words died on lips. Every face was upturned to the silent spokesman.

"AVESNES—

Beauvais, 903

De Robincourt, 911."

The sharp smack of hand-clappings broke the hush. The board was illumined again.

"AULNOY—

Beauvais, 287

De Robincourt, 149."

The opposition had a turn at rejoicing. While they cheered, the sky was made to glow by the approach of a huge electric-lighted airship. It held undivided attention. Displayed on a blazing scroll suspended from the beak were the following sentences:

"ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES DECLARE FOR
REPUBLIC!

INTERNATIONALISM WINNING IN GERMANY!"

"Hirson" was spelled letter by letter on the board, and the news-carrying airship ceased to be of interest.

"HIRSON—

Beauvais, 2,014

De Robincourt, 1,167."

Immediately there appeared:

"STE. GENEVIEVE—

Beauvais, 3,989

De Robincourt, 1,103."

The crowd became a sea of waving hats and handkerchiefs, and the cries from the victorious opposition were like the boom of the ocean on the cliffs. Other reports came on rapidly.

M. Piere de Robincourt said to the new Deputy-elect:

"You have won, sir. My congratulations—and be true to France."

He would not remain longer. His car was backed out, and bowing to the people who had supported him for more than two decades, M. de Robincourt ordered the chauffeur to drive home.

"THE RESULT——" stood out in tremulous letters.

"BEAUVAIS ELECTED—Majority in 10
minutes."

While waiting for the majority figures, lanes were cleared in the crowd, and the Beauvais car moved

along so that the new Deputy might thank his home people.

Again all eyes turned to the board.

"THE RESULT—

M. PAUL BEAUVAIS' MAJORITY, 5,429!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

VICTORY

TECHNICALITIES were everywhere resorted to in an effort to defeat the International Republic. In the United States, some authorities insisted that such a thing could not be done under the Federal Constitution as it stood. Others said, the Constitution could not be amended—the idea was entirely out of the range of American liberties! But the people clamored for amendments, or anything that would bring the country into the new union. By and by, in one way and another, after elections more exciting than the Free Silver Campaign of 1896, the Great American Republic declared for Internationalism. In England, a thousand and one objections were raised—even Magna Charta was appealed to by a few old fogies to save the Mother of Nations. *John Bull*, however, found a way to give his word. The German Empire—excuses were more numerous than in the time of the War of 1914. In France, by any amount of manoeuvres, it was left to a vote of the Chamber of Deputies to decide whether or not a delegation would be sent to the International Convention.

When all the elections of Deputies were reported, France could not be claimed as a certainty for Internationalism. Of the 600 odd Deputies, 230 were for and 341 against the proposal. The re-

mainder had not been committed to anything. Therefore, the stand of France must be determined on the floor of the Chamber.

M. Pierre de Robincourt and Mademoiselle Yvonne rejoiced when they found the position of France was so uncertain.

"My district can go crazy!" exclaimed old de Robincourt, "but France will never give up her individuality."

"Then you must not give up the fight," said Mademoiselle Yvonne. "Go to Paris and meet every Deputy—write letters, make speeches, write to the newspapers—fight! fight to the end! I will help you!"

They were much chagrined over the Beauvais victory, for it deprived de Robincourt of his opportunity to fight Internationalism on the floor of the Chamber.

"Who is the Anti-Internationalist leader?" asked Mademoiselle Yvonne.

"M. Jules de Marquand."

"The leading Deputy from Lyons?"

"Yes."

"Then, papa, he's able. Work with him—he's your friend. Go to Paris tonight."

And thus they were out of one campaign into another.

Among the Deputies, de Robincourt had many intimates. With the backing of 241 at the start, there might still be a chance to accomplish ultimate defeat.

"Of course, Yvonne," he admitted one night at the hotel in Paris, "England has declared for Internationalism, so has the United States, and that is the big thing we have to oppose—two nations. Our friends in the circle, have come out and admitted their willingness to join hands for peace. They will expect France to unite with them, and there is a feeling that France should do it."

"Yes, but France will never do it," said the daughter, hoping against hope.

An extra of *Le Matin* was being sold on the street. Yvonne sent for a copy.

"Read, papa! read: 'Russia adopts Internationalism!'"

Pierre de Robincourt got up and stalked out into the palm court.

It seemed as though the entire world had united on the idea at one time. Special elections were being held everywhere. Conferences with cabinets and senates were held daily. The Great Power idea, and the Balance of Power theory were struggling in the last throes of death. And to hurry matters along, it was reported that China and Japan were secretly mobilizing troops, and the English Navy had captured five cargoes of rifles intended for India. The Yellow Peril was ready to swoop down upon Europe.

During these auspicious days, the French Chamber of Deputies was assembled, and all business laid aside to make way for the momentous question. The button-holing was all finished; the last word

had been said by advocates and lobbyists—the Republic of France looked to Paris for the decision.

M. Paul Beauvais led the Internationalists.

Every seat in the Chamber was filled, and crowds waited in the streets and in the *La Place de la Concorde* across the *Seine*. Another magnificent speech was expected of M. Paul Beauvais. He had been accorded first recognition from the Chair, and moved forward to begin without delay. It was his opportunity, and swiftly and confidently he carried his hearers with him to the climax. When he sat down, there were shouts for the vote. Even Made-moiselle Yvonne found herself saying “Yes” and “No” alternately—her France must not be lagging in the world movement for reform!

Again and again in Beauvais’ speech he had said that France should have led the nations of the world for Internationalism, and she would, had her elections been earlier, as in the cases of other countries.

M. Jules de Marquand tried to speak, but order could not be maintained for him. His voice was drowned in howls from the Deputies. The rappings of the gavel availed nothing. At last he gave up and took his seat, white with rage.

“The vote! the vote!” yelled the excited Chamber. It was taken.

For INTERNATIONALISM, 368.

Against, 241,—to comply with their pledge.

A motion was carried by the opposition to cast the vote for Internationalism, and it was done—609

votes were recorded on the minutes for the greatest of all Reformations.

The word was passed out—someone mounted to the steps and cried: "UNANIMOUS FOR INTERNATIONALISM!"

Paris palpitated wildly as the heart of the Republic. Scenes in the streets were like those when the armistice was signed in 1918. Parades filled the boulevards; flags and bunting fluttered from every shop—people surged to and fro and cheered themselves hoarse. Messages of congratulation from other Powers were displayed from electric designs of national flags on Eiffel Tower.

One by one the other countries came in—Germany followed France; then Italy, Spain, Brazil, the Argentine Republic, Mexico, Switzerland, Holland, and Norway and Sweden announced their decisions to unite with the nations to establish the International Republic.

The Hague was selected for the place of meeting for the International Convention.

The surprise of the century was in store for civilization. One day in the lull that came after the nations had appointed delegates, the news flashed to every part of the globe: "CHINA AND JAPAN HAVE VOTED FOR INTERNATIONALISM!" and mankind was moved by the most profound acclamations of universal joy. The backbone of the Yellow Peril was broken.

CHAPTER XXIX

AN INTERNATIONALIST

"PAPA, papa! please write to him to come."

"No, Yvonne."

"France has appointed him chairman of the delegation to the International Convention, and he will go to Geneva for the 1st of November. I do want to see him before he goes."

"No."

"May I write him, requesting him to call?"

"No!"

"May mamma write?"

"The idea!—no!"

"Then, papa, write yourself to M. Raoul Beauvais."

"No!"

Mademoiselle Yvonne wished to be loyal to her father, but he made it almost difficult for her. Since following M. Paul Beauvais through the strenuous campaign, and hearing his speech in the Chamber of Deputies, she admitted she loved him far better than ever before. She could not think of living without him. Her father held out stoutly against her, saying only "No" to all her proposals. What would she do? Her mother was quite willing to help her, but the old tiger of the place must be reckoned with—one fatal mistake with him would end everything for all time.

Then the weeks began to slip away silently, and M. Paul Beauvais made no effort to see her. She had stopped his writing long before the campaign; she told him while standing by the painting of "The Story Immortalized" at the Paris Exposition of Arts, that her father objected to him—but could he not know that she cared? Ah, the campaign!—had she gone too far?

At the same time, Paul was considering the matter with his mother.

"Paul, if I were you, I should write Yvonne a note and ask to call."

"But it's difficult, mamma," said Paul. "I fear she is so opposed to my political views that she has made up her mind against me. She fought me so bitterly in the campaign. Her father is as uncompromising as Satan. He would never consent."

"But she gave you to understand in Paris that she cared for you."

"Yes; but that was before the campaign. Just before I made the speech in the Chamber, I observed her still working against me. I really never saw such a determined woman in my life—except my mother," and he smiled.

"It only proves, Paul, that she's true to her convictions."

"That may be."

"I'm sure you won her over by your speech in the Chamber of Deputies."

"I hoped I had. If she could see this reform in

the true light, she would change her views, and be as ardent for it as you are—she may now be looking at it entirely from a different point of view.”

“If I could speak with her for fifteen minutes!”

“Paul, it’s a shame! May I write to her?”

“No, that wouldn’t do.”

“I could certainly write to M. de Robincourt—I wrote to him before.”

“Yes, yes; but it would look too much like pleading the cause of a school boy. I’m now a man. I must find a way of winning this lady—if she cares. I must find out. I can’t live without her. It’s for me to decide what I shall do.”

“Then find the way. Go to the home of de Robincourt, and request an interview. You can always do that. If it’s refused, you will know what next to do.”

“While I’m in Switzerland next week with Alfred and Victor, I’ll think it out for myself. A month’s reflection will do no harm.”

The position was thus; and if Paul and Yvonne had only known! It seems that such tangles and heart aches are necessary,—even from the beginning of time.

Mademoiselle Yvonne read in the papers that the Deputy was leaving Ste. Genevieve immediately to spend a vacation in Switzerland, with his brothers, before the International Convention. He would return to Château Morestier shortly after the 1st of October. Her heart beat slowly—it was so dis-

appointing for him to go away without her seeing him. Was there no way to end this waiting and suspense? Did he care? Had she killed his love?

Mademoiselle Yvonne thought the situation out for herself. She clapped her hands gleefully. "I know what I shall do! I'm convinced he's right after all. The International Republic is the big idea. It is exactly what the world needs. I see it clearly now, and I'm an Internationalist! I shall write to M. Paul Beauvais, informing him that my views have changed, and will give him credit for having converted me by his Paris speech.

Then she changed her mind.

"No, no; I couldn't do that. Paul would know I had another motive cloaked in the letter. He might even think my declaration of Internationalism insincere. No, that would not do."

She walked alone in the fields for an hour; then turned with a bright, cheerful face, and a look of deep-set purpose. Removing her hat, and sending her two dogs to gambol on the grounds, she ran up to her work-shop, a tiny room at the top of the palace, where no one was permitted to enter unless she extended an invitation. It was kept by Mademoiselle Yvonne herself; had been furnished by her, and everything in it was hers—there she did as she liked, and had no fear of being interrupted.

In the center was a large table, and upon entering, Yvonne surveyed it quickly with her eyes. Yes, it would be about the right length. She could work

out on it the idea that had occurred to her while strolling in the meadows. It would be about the proper proportions—six feet by twelve feet.

That afternoon she went to Ste. Genevieve and Hirson, and came back with several bundles, which were immediately taken by her to the work-shop.

For about ten days, the family saw very little of Mademoiselle Yvonne. They knew where she was, and no one asked questions. They supposed she painted some new china, or did special embroidery. Her father fretted at her seclusion, but she laughed at him; kissed him, and told him to be content for a little while.

At last her work was completed—as far as she could accomplish it, and the remaining portion must come from Paris, where the order had been sent for execution.

One evening it arrived—a package more than twelve feet long—carefully done up, addressed to Mademoiselle Yvonne de Robincourt. The father was present when it came.

“Yvonne, what’s this?”

Simply she answered:

“It’s a flagstaff.”

“A flagstaff! What do you want with a flagstaff?”

“Oh, this is a very fine one!”

Mademoiselle Yvonne directed the servant to unwrap the package.

“Yes; ‘fine one!’ But if it were gold, what would

you do with it—France is not what she was once!”

“Nonsense, papa! France is greater than she ever was. You are the most stubborn statesman I ever heard of in the whole of France. Everybody is convinced that Internationalism is the thing—I mean everyone who has brains, except you. Why will you be so unyielding? You know M. Paul Beauvais is right—you have half admitted it to me.”

“Never! NEVER!”

“Well, then, you didn’t. But I’m convinced.”

“What!”

“Yes, I’m an INTERNATIONALIST!”

“Yvonne!”

“It’s true.”

Once more M. Pierre de Robincourt stamped about the large room.

Yvonne was laughing. She usually paid no attention to the bearish old man, who almost worshipped her—except in the one thing that meant most to her.

“Does the announcement cause you to forget the flagstaff, papa? It is done in gold.”

The old man turned back, and looked on while the servant unwound yards and yards of tissue paper. Finally the flagstaff was reached.

“Isn’t it a pretty one? Look, papa, at the spear-head on top, and the gold cord and tassels!”

“Yes; I see—but what’s it all about?”

“Oh, I knew you’d ask! In ten minutes, walk down to the fountain, then turn about and look.

You will then see. Promise me, papa, you will not look until you get to the fountain at the farther side of the grounds."

"Look at what?" demanded M. de Robincourt in what anyone else except Mademoiselle Yvonne would have said was an angry voice.

"At the top of the Château, *mon père!*" she answered, making a pretty grimace at him. "Take mamma with you."

Madame de Robincourt was a good, easy-going body, ready to do anyone's bidding, and never grumbled at anything. Only on matters of etiquette and social conventions was she firm.

"Come!" said the gruff old fellow, taking his kind-hearted wife by the arm. "Yvonne is up to some prank—she wants us to go to the Marie Antoinette Fountain, and not look back until we get there."

"Well, Pierre, if the child wants us to go——"

"That's just it—Yvonne will never cease to be a child, God bless her!" and the bellowing voice sounded strange in the new rôle.

"Ah, well, we shall go."

Mademoiselle Yvonne stood on the parapet of the central cupola, and watched her parents tramp out to the fountain to satisfy her whim. They turned slowly and looked.

Yvonne waved a large flag, which she had attached to the beautiful golden staff that had just been received from Paris. The old couple shaded

their eyes to make it out. It was unlike any flag they had ever seen. Yvonne held the staff up higher, and the wind caught the folds of fine silk. The wide sheet spread out and smiled on the world for the first time. The father and mother saw it plainly then—the bright red flag, with a single large white star in the center; a blue field in the upper left-hand corner, filled with a lot of pretty designs. M. de Robincourt looked again. He made them out—flags in miniature of all the nations. Mademoiselle Yvonne's voice rang out clear and distinct: "It is the **FLAG OF THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLIC!** I dedicate it to the World of Peace, and may it ever wave over land and sea and be loved by generations and generations until the end of time."

"And unfurled over my home!" he roared back.

"Yes!" she cried, merry peals of laughter ringing out in the autumn air, "this is where it begins its career,—salute it, sir!"

She kept calling to them to salute it, until both of them did as she wished. Old Pierre de Robincourt gave in good-humoredly, and saluted in grand style. Mademoiselle Yvonne was satisfied, and came on down into the gallery with her creation.

"What are you going to do, Yvonne?" asked her father.

"I'm going to display this flag on the north wall, until I take it elsewhere."

"What!"

"This flag—**THE FLAG OF THE INTERNATIONAL**

REPUBLIC—is to be displayed immediately on the north wall of the gallery.”

“I wouldn’t do that!”

“Yes you would, if you were an Internationalist,” said Yvonne, quickly assuming an attitude for defensive argument.

“Let her have her way, Pierre,” pleaded the mother.

Mademoiselle Yvonne needed no further consent. She did not wait for her father to speak, but proceeded to direct the servant who was placing the hook and socket, so that the flag would hang prettily towards “The Story Immortalized.” M. de Robin-court said something about his daughter’s willfulness, but secretly he admired the flag she had made.

“Yvonne, you’re just as whimsical as you were when you used to steal *Dante* out and ride him at the risk of your life.”

“Oh, that hasn’t been so very long ago! Why should I be different? I wish *Dante* were as gay now as he was then. I would ride him to Ste. Genevieve and back on a run.”

“Ride him, Yvonne. You have been playing for more than three months—very much like a child. Ride *Dante*, and then, perhaps, you’ll be satisfied.”

“Do you mean it, papa?”

“Certainly!—*Dante’s* not so spirited as he was, but he’s still a very fine horse. Ride him.”

“Will you come with me?”

“No; I’ll stay here and haul down your flag!”

"No, you won't—the flag is going to stay there!"

"Jean, bring *Dante* for Mademoiselle," said de Robincourt.

Yvonne ran off to her rooms to search for the red riding habit of which she thought so much when she was the terror of all the horses—and especially of *Dante*. She found it, and let down her hair, just as she wore it eight years before, at the age of sixteen. When she appeared before her father, in spite of his severe dignity, he smiled, and dropped a mock courtesy. The mother threw up her hands in a sort of mild dismay.

"My pretty Yvonne!" said the father, "you're just as you were then. You're more beautiful. How becoming—go! *Dante* is waiting!"

The hue of the Robincourt Forest was a blending of red and gold. Not a twig stirred in the bank of dying leaves. Long shafts of light streamed low over the heights and warmed the somber trunks of trees. Yvonne entered the arched roadway in the wood, riding *Dante* at an easy canter, and was soon lost to the loving gaze of the old couple at the gate. On and on the clumsy *Dante* carried her, while the fire of his former days awoke, and by and by, the gaiety of her mood rejuvenated the dream of her maiden adventure. If that Summer morning could only come again! But she feared time had changed everything. Evening had come, and she feared the gloomy night would leave her alone. For how could she go on when he did not care?—her

soul was too proud to admit that she mourned for him—she must remember and not be sad!

Another rider moved into the straight way at the upper end. His steed was black—and clumsy, too! He was coming towards Mademoiselle Yvonne. She cried aloud from sheer happiness: "*Dante*, run away with me!" But *Dante's* reckless colt antics were in the past, and he merely pricked up his ears and jogged on—his fair mistress could not urge him into the pace that would send him sprawling at the crossing.

Paul Beauvais and Mademoiselle Yvonne met at the crossing—for while she played with her flag, and was coaxed by her father to ride old *Dante* again, by a singular coincidence, Paul persuaded himself to ride his pet, *Louis XIV.*, to M. de Robincourt to learn his fate. He could not believe she came meeting him, but when speaking distance had been gained, there was no doubt. It was like unto all the clever stories—only this one was real. Smiles brightened his face for the salutation.

"Yvonne!" he called, imitating the rescue.

"And you were coming?"

"Yes—and you wanted me to come?"

The last blink of the sun flickered in her face, and he saw his answer.

Several minutes later, she held him at arm's length, and looked long into his eyes. "It is true, then, that you are mine forever!"

"Of course!"

"Shall we dismount and walk as on that first day? I'll send *Dante* on ahead."

But *Dante* would not go. He did not understand why he should be deserted in the Forest, and, after considerable persuasion, he walked along lazily in front of them towards home.

Again the mother was anxious. It was almost dark, and *Dante* was seen coming, riderless. But old Pierre de Robincourt said:

"You know Yvonne has not finished all her pranks. I never saw such a girl. She'll be back in time for dinner."

.....

Pierre de Robincourt gave his consent. His cordial reception of the now famous young Deputy was a surprise to Mademoiselle and to Paul. M. de Robincourt monopolized Paul to such an extent that Yvonne complained. But, no, the man who could defeat him as Paul had done, was entitled to every attention. And so the daughter had to give way, and share her joy with her father. Finally, M. de Robincourt escorted Paul into the gallery and showed him the flag of the International Republic.

"It's Yvonne's whim," M. de Robincourt hastened to say.

"It shall be more than a whim. I shall propose it to the International Convention. It is a capital idea, and to be——"

"Don't say it, Paul. An enemy of the cause never made it. I'm an INTERNATIONALIST!"

He took her hands in his, and the father stalked on, pretending to examine some of the paintings.

"Papa, you may come back now. I want to ask you a question in the presence of Paul."

"Yes, yes," he said, looking at the young couple queerly from under his shaggy eyebrows.

"Why wouldn't you write to Paul and tell him to come,—or why wouldn't you let me write?"

"Because I wanted to know if he cared enough for you to come of his own free will!" snapped the old man in his usual brusque tones.

CHAPTER XXX

REALITIES

"So! we are one with the other again, *Mademoiselle Marie*. It is a great party, this that *Madame Terrier* is giving tonight."

"Yes, *Herr von Essenhendel*."

"Shall we go a little in the palm court?"

Mademoiselle Marie Beauvais left a gay group of friends reluctantly, and followed the young banker a short distance, and then they walked on side by side.

"I've not seen you very much since the ball at the president's home—twice only, I believe."

"I've not been from home so much."

"I see your father every day at the bank."

"Yes."

"We've not had much time to talk, *Mademoiselle*."

"No?" she said in the form of a question; then realized he was referring to conversation with her.

"I had hoped the few times we have met, I should have been with you more, but there were others."

Marie could not see the import of these remarks, and felt uncomfortable.

"But we are now together once more, and I shall speak."

She looked at him wonderingly, but was powerless to stop him from saying whatever he had in mind.

They walked on some distance under the arbor beyond the fountain, and Herr von Essenhendel placed himself as if to bar her escape through the trellised entrance.

"I have come to ask you, Mademoiselle Marie, to marry me."

"I'm sorry, sir, that you ask me to marry you. I know of no one who is forcing you to such a desperate step."

"On, no, no. You do not understand—I mean that I'm so much in love with you that I must ask you."

"Really! well, I'm sorry again. I don't love you at all, and I don't feel that I'm obliged to say, 'Yes!'"

Herr von Essenhendel saw that Mademoiselle Marie was taking him very lightly—even laughing at him. He did not intend to appear flippant, and began to get confused at the way she received his declaration of love.

"Oh, Mademoiselle Marie, you do not understand. I'm not joking—I——"

"Neither am I!" she said merrily, but with an earnest note in her voice.

"I—I do love you."

"It will be well for you to think again, Herr Otto. You may be deceiving yourself."

He flushed a little, and turned as if to go. However, the persistency of his race drove him back to the task, and he looked straight and rather hard

into the pretty, coquettish face of Marie, and said:

"Love-making does not come to my hand as easily as banking, but I don't wish you to laugh at me, without comprehending that I'm sincere, and have really come to love you very much."

She listened patiently, and felt ashamed of having been rude to him. He seemed to be a young man of refinement, and everyone spoke favorably of him.

"My father, Mademoiselle, is a very knowing man—he really makes it his business to know about everyone of note, or, that I would say, amounts to anything. I don't know why, but such is the case. He called me to him from Paris, and told me of certain business here in Ste. Genevieve—so and so, and then he told me to come here and marry you."

"The idea!" she exclaimed indignantly.

"I'm only telling you; please hear me to the end, and you can do as you like."

"The business, yes, I could undertake that, but I kept my own counsel about the love affair. I didn't say yea, and I didn't say nay—it's not wise to contrary one's father. Well, I came. You I met at the president's house, and I liked you at once—I throw myself at your feet, and acknowledge that my father is right—you are the girl for me."

"Nonsense! Herr von Essenhendel, I can't marry you, and I don't want to hurt you—but no more of this. I want you to tell me, however, what your father knows of me."

"He did not tell me."

"Who is your father?"

"Count von Essenhendel."

"I wish you success in your business, but you may report to your father that you cannot marry the lady he has selected, because she refuses."

"Perhaps, Mademoiselle, if you would allow me to speak pointedly, you would change your mind when the business begins to pinch. My father didn't explain the business to me either; didn't tell me why I should do so and so, but he told me how to do it, and I have obeyed—if I'm not mistaken, your father is quite within my father's net already, and you may be glad to consider my offer."

Marie flushed in anger. The insinuation of the young German was unbelievable.

"How dare you to hint to me that I must marry you! Leave me instantly!—never speak to me after this!"

"As you like, Mademoiselle," he said. "I would have it otherwise, but your pleasure is granted for the moment."

Marie hurried back to her friends, and soon found an excuse for returning home. The experience with Herr von Essenhendel was so exasperating that she had taken a violent headache.

On arriving at the Château Morestier, she called to her mother, and related all that had been said by von Essenhendel.

"It is true, Marie, that for some unknown reason your father has been drawn into difficulties in his

business. He has not mentioned to me this particular bank—there are others,—and I don't know whether he has said anything about this new cashier. Probably he does not suspect him. Anyway, you acted wisely. Please do not mention the affair to anyone else."

"Why, mamma, you know I wouldn't—I couldn't think of such a thing. You will tell papa about the business?"

"Your father and I shall talk about his business, but I don't think it wise to connect your affair with it, Marie."

Madame Beauvais retired to her room, but not to sleep. The information brought to her by Marie was astounding. What object could Count von Essenhendel have in ruining her husband; at the same time want his son to wed her daughter? She had been puzzled over the business tangles for the past three years—could it be that von Essenhendel had been at the bottom of all the troubles? She was sure Raoul did not know this—did she dare to tell him? Raoul had never succeeded in getting from her the name of the invader—it was not supposed that she had ever heard of him again; but she was now forced to face a difficult situation in which it might be necessary to discuss the matter with Raoul, in order that they might circumvent this brutal German, who was evidently pursuing her and her husband. What could be his intention?

The fact was, notwithstanding the credits estab-

lished by Paul, and the advantage gained by securing the option from Lederfrank, the business had gone on into a worse tangle than ever. The Paris house found an excuse for cancelling the agreement for credits. Other banks began to curtail money supplies, and the end of the long struggle seemed to be very near. Another difficulty also was that neither Lederfrank nor Beauvais could understand the complication. Lederfrank, of course, knew the source of origin, for he worked in a dual capacity—he knew that Count von Essenhendel operated in his mysterious ways. Since the error he had made in granting the option to Paul Beauvais, the Jew had been kept out of the secret workings of the Count and Dr. Badenheim. As for Raoul Beauvais, he did not have sufficient knowledge of the background to be able to suspect anyone, except his partner, Lederfrank. He could not reconcile his conduct, however, with the endless troubles that they were getting into, for Lederfrank was quite as much surprised and baffled as anyone. There were many dangers threatening, and no door of escape left open. If something could not be done at once, the business must go into the hands of a receiver.

The sorely tried Raoul finally came to the conclusion it would be better to sell his shares to Lederfrank—if such a thing were possible. In the beginning of the difficulties, Lederfrank had offered to purchase his shares, and had referred to the offer several times since. Hence one evening, when Raoul

sat in his library exhausted and discouraged, from trying to solve their problems, he came to the conclusion that he should sell, and, after dinner, so expressed himself to Madame Beauvais.

"Marie told me something last night, Raoul, that may interest and surprise you. Of course, if you sell your shares, I don't know how it will be of any particular concern. Anyway, I think you are wise to let the shares go—you have a comfortable fortune laid aside, which is not involved in the money difficulties of the firm, and I would get out and take life easy."

"What did Marie tell you?"

"Why, at Madame Territier's, a friend told her that one of the banks here was working to entrap your business, and some new cashier was at the bottom of that institution's operations."

"That would be the German who has recently come on from Paris," said Raoul, sitting up as if trying to think harder; "but such a position is not an important one in continental banks—more so than twenty years ago,—but this German is only a youngster. I can scarcely believe such a thing possible. The bank has always been friendly to me, and I can remember no particular instance where I have had any controversy with this young man. We've had some business with him during the last four months, but it was all brought on by transactions with other banks. The trouble is general, Hermance—it's in the air, and Marie has only heard

what many other people know. It will make no difference in the end. I'm thoroughly tired, and shall give up tomorrow, if Mr. Lederfrank sticks to his original offer."

The subject was dropped. During the next half hour, Raoul and Hermance sat reading two of the latest magazines.

"Oh, by the way, Hermance, I saw today the public announcement of the wedding-to-be between Paul and old de Robincourt's daughter. The bans will be published beginning on Sunday at St. Joseph's. You hadn't told me about this."

"No. You and I agreed several years ago on this matter of Paul's welfare. As a mother should, and especially in view of our understanding, I didn't say anything to you."

"H'm! Well, I think you should tell Paul of his origin. I don't think he would wish to go on with this, if he knew. He would at least have the opportunity of being honorable with Yvonne de Robincourt. You know old Pierre would be furious if he found it out afterwards."

"But how is he to find it out? Only you and I and Dr. Joumonville know it—even *Grand-mère* Dauphin is now dead."

"Isn't it enough that we know it? Don't you think, Hermance, we should tell Paul?"

Hermance began to cry silently, but managed to say: "Probably we should." After further hesitancy, she went on:

"What good, though, would come of it? Would it not spoil his life? Such information would never be kept by Paul from Yvonne, and M. de Robincourt might break up what I consider a most congenial love affair. Would it be just to Paul? He's not responsible in any way; you have long before now agreed that I'm not to blame—why put a stumbling block in the way of such a promising—yes, great—young man?"

"I hardly expected that we could agree, Hermance. It's a matter of conscience."

"I don't see it that way."

"I insist," said the husband, almost losing control of himself. "Paul must be told, and you must tell him."

"Why make it so hard for me? I'm happy that you think somewhat better of Paul, although you will never yield sufficient to win him back. I think it is almost stupid of you. You told me that when he had accomplished so much for you in business, he did it unselfishly, and you felt ashamed you had so misjudged him. Why don't you say this to Paul, and receive him as your son? You could then talk with him, and he would understand why you have been so bitter against him all these years. The International Convention will finish its work in a few days, if it is not already finished, and Paul will return probably covered with honors. Oh, Raoul, you cannot be so cruel as to spoil the future for this boy! Why must you give in now, and insist

that all this miserable thing be laid out and emphasized at the moment when Northern France, and many other parts of the world are honoring Paul?"

"I grant you, Hermance, that Paul is a brighter man than I ever supposed he would be."

"That isn't what I mean—that he is a brighter man. Paul has always been bright. He is coming out better than I expected, though."

"I shall not argue with you beyond what I have already said. Think this over. I feel Paul should know everything."

"But it would make it so difficult for Paul! What possible good could be accomplished? I feel, of course, you have always been unjust to him, and now you would literally spoil his future!"

"I've tried, Hermance, to be otherwise—I can't. The resentment is so strong in me that I cannot conquer it. Paul is not my son—that means everything to me. He's your son—that means everything to you. These differences between your position and mine, and the question of blood and traits of character, annoy me besides. It's much better that we cease talking about it."

"Please, Raoul, try to forget all of this before he returns. I know it's difficult. I understand you—but you must overcome it at once."

The mother could think of no reply to the question: "Is it right that Paul should be left in ignorance?" But she never got the consent of her mind

to have him told. While she sat thinking, the butler brought in a telegram.

"From Paul!" she exclaimed, "we shall have the news, Raoul."

She read aloud:

"The International Republic accomplished. My original Constitution, slightly amended, has been adopted. Sixteen nations came in at the close—Japan and China last. Provisional officers appointed, pending election: M. Henri Gamberonet, Geneva, President; Lord Pelmeston, London, First Vice-President; James Anderson Fielding, New York, Second Vice-President.

"Paul Beauvais."

At the same time, Yvonne de Robincourt received the identical telegram, with the following addition:

"Your lone star flag was unanimously adopted by the Convention, and the original ordered encased in glass, and preserved in this building. I am returning at once.

"Paul Beauvais."

At the moment Madame Beauvais and her husband were discussing business and Paul, Jacob Lederfrank was communing with himself. He had also become tired of the worry of business. Trying to be fair to two men of opposite characters, had become a burden. He had never taken his wife into

confidence—she knew nothing of the Beauvais secret,—the responsibility was too great for him to bear. He would not go further. The Count von Eisenhendel, since the recent death of Dr. Baden-heim, expected too much of him. The German nobleman was overbearing—his rash conduct might at any moment involve Lederfrank in complications. Therefore, the Jew was paying the penalty that all men have to pay for double dealing, and trembled with fear lest he be found out. Weary and nervous, he went into his study, and wrote as follows to the Count:

“My dear Count,—You have manipulated the finances of the business in such a way—all unknown to me—that we have reached the end. I have no heart to go on with the disguise. M. Beauvais will never give up, and I cannot force him. Besides, the mining engineers are having great difficulty in procuring sufficient ore to run the big mills. It is clear that we shall have to break the rear walls of the mines to get into our reserves. This will require money. The banks will not help us—our credit is gone, and debts are hanging over the company.

“In view of the position, I tender to you my resignation, to take effect ten days from date. I enclose herewith all the shares I hold in trust for you, properly

endorsed, and you will also find the papers of interest to you.

"You will, therefore, best serve yourself by appointing an able man at once to come and take my place. My decision is final, and no amount of persuasion or money can induce me to continue this dual living.

"Yours faithfully,

"Jacob Lederfrank."

When M. Beauvais proposed to M. Lederfrank, next day, the sale of the shares on the basis of the original agreement, Lederfrank showed no interest. He made the same laconic reply: "In about a week I shall give you an answer."

Beauvais asked him: "Have you ever taken particular notice of Herr von Essenhendel, at the bank?"

Lederfrank did not reply at once. He was afraid Beauvais might be on the eve of uncovering the scheme.

"Did you understand my question?" asked Beauvais with spirit.

"Yes; I was only trying to remember if I had noticed anything in particular."

"I've ben told," said Beauvais, endeavoring to think as he spoke, "that this young German is more or less implicated with the cause of our business troubles, although I can't see how, and I thought it proper to call it to your attention."

"He may be, Raoul. It seems everyone is against

us. I'm only glad that most of our employees are scattered over the various countries, so as to be able to secure something to do—in case the closing becomes necessary."

The Jew's reply seemed to satisfy Beauvais, and he said:

"Then you also have become weary of the struggle! And yet, Lederfrank, a magnificent enterprise is somehow caught up in an unseen net. It's a puzzle—a mystery to me. I've worried myself out of my mind trying to locate the cause—there seems to have been a conspiracy, during these last five to seven years, to ruin us—but why——? When Paul re-established our credit, I thought we could see a clear road—but no! I repeat—I cannot understand it! There must be an explanation!"

"You have indicated your willingness to sell your shares. I don't think I can purchase them, but if I can secure an opportunity to dispose of my own, will you and Paul exercise your option, or free me to sell?"

"Paul will be here tomorrow, and we can discuss the option," replied Beauvais.

"Ask him to come to the office tomorrow at eleven o'clock."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE OTHER BATTLEFIELD

JANUARY icicles hung from the trees and house eaves, and sparkled in the cold morning light. Raoul and Hermance had just come down to breakfast, and stood together at the window silently gazing out upon the snow-locked world. The city of Ste. Genevieve, with its smoking factory stacks, the silent Oise, the heights, white with crystals, and the moving crowds of bread-winners in the thoroughfare below, were taken in with a sweep of their eyes. It was late. The evening before on returning from the last conference with Lederfrank, Raoul had found Paul back from the long session of the International Convention. He and Hermance had waited for the young man to pay a visit to the de Robincourt's, and then sat up late with him to hear his account of the proceedings that secured to civilization the guarantee of perpetual peace and prosperity. Somehow the march of events, crowned by the greatest achievement of nations co-operating in concert, cast a restful spell over Raoul, and he felt at ease, even though disaster seemed imminent to the industry to which he had given the best years of his life. He turned to his wife, and said:

"Hermance, this wintry day will relegate me to retirement. I welcome it. My struggle has been

long and sustained; there is nothing more I can do. I shall be happy with you."

Hermance put her arms about his neck and kissed him.

"You've done well, Raoul. We were poor—you have worked and earned plenty for us; we were alone—you have made it possible for our children to get started in callings and professions suited to each. They'll be a comfort to us."

"There is one regret I have, Hermance. Please don't misunderstand me. I deplore the spirit in me that has rebelled against Paul. I wish I could tear that bitterness out of my heart!"

"Oh! I'm so glad to hear you speak that way. Raoul; after all these years!"

"Yes, I do feel it, Hermance. He is really a great man, and his future is yet before him. It's strange I should have been so cruel to him, but I couldn't help it. The resentment became a part of me. I was furious because my own had disappointed me."

"If you will try only a little, you will forget. Paul does not see that you have begun to admire him, but it will not take him long to note the change—then he will quickly respond."

"I'm sure," the gray-haired man of business said, "if he could have known in recent years his real father, I believe he would have chosen me as his friend."

Hermance was touched by the odd tenacity with which he held to the cause of his disappointment—

he had narrowed it down to a choice on the part of Paul.

"You have no doubt, have you, Raoul?"

"Yes, and no. I've given Paul occasion to dislike me. Then blood!—blood counts."

"But Paul is French—he is my child entirely; he has given himself to work for the glory of France."

"Yes, yes." The man withdrew himself into his own thoughts. Then as if talking to someone absent, he said: "However, I remember Madame Mores-tier's prophecy. It has been running through my mind during these last months—since I have evidence of Paul's unselfish disposition. If you recall, she indicated there would come a time when perhaps he may be called upon to choose between France and Germany—but the International Republic puts that out of the way. I'm wondering!"

"Put it from you today, Raoul. Attend to closing up your business, and then perhaps another day may be clearer."

"There is one request I have to make to you, Hermance. That bit of brown paper you have framed and hung here by the bed, destroy it, for my sake. It annoys me. I know you prize it as a memento of the battlefield, but it was written with a German's blood. Put it from us. When this fine German and I fought in the trench that night, and decided to leave one another without continuing the fight, it was agreed we might meet on another battle-

field. It may be my trial has been the other battlefield—if so, I'm not the victor. I do not want hate to linger longer with me."

As he continued speaking, she obeyed. The note of brown paper was taken from the gilt frame, and she put a lighted match to it and watched it burn. The ashes she blew off the dish into the icy wind without, where the particles danced uncertainly for a second, and then scattered away to the hills.

The breakfast gong sounded, and Raoul and Hermance went to meet the two daughters and Paul, who were waiting at the table.

"Oh, papa, when ever have you been so late?" cried *Petite-Hermance*. It's so nice to have you with us like—like—like one of us!"

They smiled at the utterance of the pet of the family.

Once they were seated about the table, Marie began to laugh at Paul. She kept it up for some time.

"You may as well tell us, Paul—we must know in a few days anyway."

The father looked at Marie, and entered into her spirit of merriment.

"She wants me to name my wedding day," said Paul, taking courage.

Raoul cleared his throat, and really struggled to look natural, as he said: "We should all know the day."

"Certainly, Paul," added the mother.

"January 28th, at two o'clock in the afternoon

at St. Joseph's," admitted Paul proudly. "The invitations will be issued tomorrow or the day after."

There was a hearty round of congratulations, which delayed the breakfast. Each one had something special to say, and *Petite-Hermance* again excited laughter with her gushing way of putting her comments.

"You're lucky, Paul," in conclusion, "except in one particular."

"And pray what is that?" asked Madame Beauvais.

"Oh, the gruff old father-in-law—he and papa will not be able to visit!"

M. Beauvais could not restrain from laughing whole-heartedly—for he and de Robincourt were still enemies.

But while they enjoyed *Petite-Hermance's* remark, a letter came from de Robincourt, addressed to M. Raoul Beauvais, and the family sat at fixed attention while it was read:

"My dear Friend:

"You will not object to this letter, I hope, when I admit I have forgotten the exact cause of our disagreement over politics, and have consequently long ago remembered only the pleasures of our days of friendship.

"Your son has probably told you that I have given him my daughter, notwithstanding the fact of his having defeated me

so overwhelmingly in the election. It is, therefore, proper that our families should be united in good will one towards the other.

"I shall call to see you on Thursday, the day after tomorrow, and that evening I beg the honor of having you and your family to dine at my château.

"Madame de Robincourt and Mademoiselle Yvonne join with me in kindly greetings, and I remain

"Yours sincerely,

"Pierre de Robincourt."

"I withdraw my comment!" exclaimed *Petite-Hermance*. "Of course, we shall go, mamma! Mamma, you and papa accept at once. I shall bring the writing materials."

From these delightful scenes, Raoul and Paul went to face the last act in the drama of the phosphate mines. Raoul had not mentioned the business, but as they walked away from the Château Mores-tier, he changed his habit of years, gracefully unbended as he went, and told the young man what had taken place.

"It's a shame to give up the enterprise, but I believe your decision is wise under the circumstances," said Paul. "I do not think we should attempt to exercise our option. For some reason the industrial has been greatly handicapped for several years. I doubt our ability to interest large

capital in it—the business has fallen off; the organization is more or less affected—capitalists may think it unusual that we are not able to give an explanation.”

“Why! there comes Lederfrank to meet us,” said Raoul, looking at Paul. Something has happened—notice he is walking excitedly—very extraordinary for Lederfrank.”

“Your shares are sold, Raoul—for cash! The money is now in the office, if you want to sell.” Alarm was written all over the Jew.

“Good morning, M. Lederfrank,” said Paul, taking no notice of the Hebrew’s state.

“Oh, good morning, Paul—you will excuse me; such a business! such a business! Your father and I have been most excited for weeks, and in the prospect of getting it settled, I forgot you had been away. I’m glad, very glad to see you.”

“Why are you upset?” asked Raoul. “Are you purchasing my shares?”

“No, no; that’s the reason of my flurry—a big man,—how shall I say it? a hard man to deal with is there to take over the business. He’s not such a hard man either, but please promise to go easy with him—for my sake.”

“You’re talking like a crazy man, Lederfrank,” said Raoul. “What’s the trouble?”

“There’s no trouble. It’s cash you want. It is all there ready, and lucky you are. I’m getting out too late probably, but I’m leaving today myself.

Only be easy with this big fellow—hard man, I say, and yet generous. I think he has good intentions towards Paul.”

“*Sacré!* Who is this man of whom you seem so much afraid?” demanded Raoul.

“He’s the Count von Essenhendel!—he has just come from the Rhine.”

Raoul and Paul exchanged glances.

“I’ll go back to him while you’re coming. I slipped away to give you the news before you arrived.”

Raoul and Paul slackened pace to give the overwrought Jew time to return.

“What does this mean?” asked Paul.

“I’ve no idea. I know no more of it than you. There has come lately to Ste. Genevieve a young banker by the name of von Essenhendel, is the only explanation I can offer.

The two men went on straight to the office, and entered as if prepared to begin the daily routine.

Lederfrank bustled up, and said:

“Just come over here, gentlemen, I wish to introduce you to a friend with whom I have had considerable correspondence.”

The stage play of his voice was evident.

A tall, broad-shouldered man of a flabby but *distingué* appearance, got up with difficulty, struggling under the weight of corpulence. He came forward shambling like a fat bear.

“Allow me, M. Raoul Beauvais and M. Paul

Beauvais to present my friend, the Count Frederick Wilhelm von Essenhendel."

The Frenchman bowed politely, but stiffly—there was even a suggestion of coldness.

"It is a wintry day what you have," said the German, after expressing himself as pleased at meeting the two men of whom he admitted M. Lederfrank had often written.

"Only an average January day," said Raoul, evincing an inclination to hurry on the interview.

Count von Essenhendel detected the resentment.

"I've come to purchase your shares in this business," said the Count. "I now own the shares formerly held by your associate, M. Lederfrank. I understand you wish to sell."

Had there been any hesitancy on the part of Raoul and Paul to sell, it would have vanished with the announcement that the Count held the controlling interest.

"I was not aware," said Paul, "that my option had expired—the option I arranged for my father to purchase M. Lederfrank's shares."

"It was my mistake, Paul—I had, well——"

"You mean, M. Lederfrank," said Paul, deliberately, "you had a prior obligation with the Count von Essenhendel?"

"You're right!" said the Count, beginning to laugh in a heavy guffaw key.

"Come into my private office, gentlemen," said Raoul Beauvais, beginning to show irritation.

They entered, and took seats.

"Do I understand," said Raoul, rather tersely, "that you had an agreement with the Count von Eisenhendel almost a year ago, and yet executed this option to me and my son?"

Lederfrank winced, and stirred his feet uneasily—his eyes wandered to the red-faced Count.

The Count answered merely by shaking in a chuckle, and Lederfrank's discomfort increased.

"Under-handed proceeding!" said Paul, in rising anger.

"And the coming of your son to the bank," said Raoul somewhat fiercely, "had a significance, I assume!"

"Looking after my interests," replied the Count in a sudden savage snap.

This retort was as disturbing as the fire of a revolver. The very air in the office changed in a second of time.

"And do you expect me to sell you my shares, after you have schemed for a year to wreck the business, making my giving up a certainty! A Frenchman is never a puppy! Bah!"

The Count had planned to be smooth in his negotiations, but the abrupt lapse in his temper had spoiled it all—he lost hold of himself, and prepared to bulldoze his way through.

"I've been your benefactor, sir, for years. This business was originally built with my money. This cringing Jew at my side had not a penny. I fur-

nished his money—I've loaned you yours! You restored your château with my money!—you—you——!"

"Impossible!" Raoul sprang to his feet, and pushed his chair to one side.

"For my sake, gentlemen!—for my sake——!" begged Lederfrank.

The Count was puffing like a pursuing wild beast. He ran on——

"It is not your choice—I hold the mortgages on the plant!—I can foreclose in twenty-four hours. I come to you as an honorable man, and offer to pay you cash for your shares—after giving you the benefit of my money for twenty years—what would you!"

"Oh, that I should see this day!" whined Lederfrank.

"Get out of the way, sir!" stormed the Count. "You did your duty. These men are both debtors to you—they can't reproach you! I don't! Hold your tongue—let me settle this—you've done no wrong—nor have I!"

A moment of awkward silence followed. Raoul and Paul were both too astounded to say a word. They could not comprehend why the German had been so generous.

The Count wheezed and coughed, and the perspiration rolled off his forehead.

"There is your money, sir!" shouted the Count, slapping a large canvas bag down on the end of

Raoul's desk. Count it, and deliver to me your shares!"

"I must know more about this proceeding," said Raoul, white with rage, "before I do anything."

"So! and you don't think you know enough already!" roared the Count, blazing like a furnace.

"Sir," said Paul stepping between the men, "your conduct is very, very offensive. If you will be seated, you may be allowed to explain yourself. This office is my father's until he parts with it, and if you cannot be a gentleman, I shall put you into the street."

The ring in this strong man's voice calmed the overwrought, excited German, and he flounced into a chair.

"I shall explain then, if you wish it," started in the Count, blowing and swelling the while.

"You will not require me, will you?" asked Lederfrank, scurrying for the door as fast as he could.

"Stay!" yelled the nobleman, catching Lederfrank's coat as he passed. "Damn it! you've stolen nothing—you've harmed no one. Stay! you've been a friend to these men. They can charge you with no crime. What the devil are you trembling for!—it's not like you! Sit down!"

Raoul and Paul looked on in amazement.

Then the Count began the story. It was as though he measured the dangers of his leap and past eventualities with determination.

"I sent for Jacob Lederfrank years ago. I had

met him in Paris. My family has known his for at least three generations. I offered to furnish him money with which to go into business. He came to this city—a small village then—and after a time, appeared at my castle on the Rhine, and told me about these phosphate mines you and he had discovered together. Well, I put up the money. My lawyer drew the original agreement. From time to time, Lederfrank communicated to me your needs and the requirements of the business, and I furnished the necessary funds. You paid it back. You have grown rich off of the investment—so has Lederfrank, although he had not a penny in it—and my returns satisfied me more than all the cash I advanced during the entire period. You earned all you got. You discovered the mines; your business ability has been worth your earnings. I have my money back with interest—you owe me nothing. I was your unknown benefactor, and I see no reason why we should quarrel because I want the business for my son,—and you have agreed to sell your shares at par.”

“But why should Jacob Lederfrank deceive me all these years?”

“For your own good, M. Beauvais. I advised him to say the money was his—when he told me of you, I was sure you would not accept help from me, and I made it obligatory for Lederfrank that he play this part. He has done it well. Not once have I visited him here—I have not sent an auditor

—I have had no spy. Only when you were so unreasonable about parting with your shares did I send my son to the bank to look after my interests. Through a series of complications in the business, which no man could understand or explain, it now falls out you have come to the end of your ropes. As the benefactor of both of you, I claim I have a right to pay you out whole, and take the business and resuscitate it—am I not right?”

“If there’s truth in what you say,” said Paul, coolly, “I suppose you are right.”

The Count’s face became purple, but he let the remark pass unnoticed.

“What shall I do?” asked Raoul of Paul.

“Let him have the shares.”

Raoul went to the safe, and got the certificates. They were promptly transferred, and passed over to the Count. The bag of money was emptied—the amount was exact. Raoul put it back into the receptacle, and handed it to Paul, saying: “Take charge of it for the present.”

The corporation books were called for, and certain entries made. Then the Count signed some papers.

M. Beauvais and Paul got up, and put on their coats, making ready to leave the building; but both of them were moving mechanically, as if not thoroughly assured of having done the right thing.

“I have not finished,” said the Count, with a show of pomp in his manner.

"What else would you ask? If there are additional papers——" Raoul was saying.

"No, no; that is all finished. You own nothing here now."

"Well?" asked Paul.

"It's to you, I would speak. Take this, and then we shall discuss it."

"What is it?" asked Paul, advancing a step.

"You can read."

Paul took the paper and glanced at it, and his face became livid.

"I don't understand it!"

"I have made you a present of the business——can't you read?"

"But I don't want your business! I can't understand your generosity! There's no reason why you should buy my father's business, and then give it to me! Sir, I refuse to accept it!"

The Count had been so conceited on the certainty of his plan that he was not prepared for refusal from Paul. He could not comprehend a man who would refuse a fortune in one lump——consequently, he lost his temper.

"You're not such a fool, I hope!" he said stamping.

"You're right, however; I hope I'm not such a fool! Why should you give it to me?—I demand an explanation!" Paul's anger was very great.

The Count again saw he had made a mistake. If he pressed his offer, or said anything rash, the

pet hobby of his life would be lost. This Paul Beauvais was no ordinary man. Great care would have to be taken, if success were to be attained. Therefore, Count von Essenhendel considered before speaking.

"I'm sorry, young man, you misconstrue my intention. I assure you what I propose to do is absolutely free from ulterior motives. It may be my blustering has alienated your mind—or put me in an erroneous light. It's only my way. You and M. Beauvais cannot say I have not done much for you. I may be rough—even hard at times, but I have been much interested in your progress, and M. Lederfrank's account of you has been most flattering. If I wish to endow you out of my immense fortune, after aiding your family, why should you be angry?"

"I don't understand it!" said Paul.

"It's the German way!" flared the Count.

"For the more reason, then, it's not my way! I don't know why you should first help my father, and then oppress him, compelling him to transfer his shares to you, and afterwards offer to give them to me as a present. It's foolish child's play! I could never accept a gift coming through such meanderings. Besides, I'm quite capable of making my own fortune."

"I think the Count means well," said Raoul. "I've probably been hasty myself. I don't understand his generosity to us, but I'm grateful for what he has done. His loans enabled me to make a competence

for my family. I repeat, I don't understand why he should have done these things—I don't want to go and have him feel I am unappreciative. It's right you should refuse his offer, whatever may be his motive. I think we may thank him, and go our way."

The Count, when analyzed from the standpoint of German many-sidedness, was not a bad man. He usually had all his whims granted; his will was law, but he really meant to do right, only it must be in his own way. If he were opposed, he became unreasonable. Early in life, he repented of his great sin, and in his ingenious, but generous scheming, had gone as far as he knew how to make recompense. If Lederfrank had not reported Beauvais' jealousy to him, it might not have brought to the surface his baser traits. He determined by means, far from foul, to put Paul into possession of the business, lest Beauvais, in distributing his fortune, might decide to be unfair. The business had been created for Paul, more than for Beauvais, and it was proper for Paul to have it in the end. That was the light in which the Count saw it, and whether he were right or wrong, he meant to humiliate the foster father in the presence of the young man; but when face to face with the individuals, he found their points of view and dispositions entirely different from what he had expected.

"I'm glad you do appreciate," said the Count, feelingly, taking Raoul's extended hand—after a

short moment of hesitation. "This has been the one work of my lifetime, and has given me infinite satisfaction. You wonder why I do it. Well, I——"

The Count paused, as if to take them into confidence, and tell them something. He continued:

"If you're content, I'm happy. Whatever transpires, I want you to remember me as a man, who tried to do his duty to you."

Both Raoul and Paul were embarrassed by this singular turn in the conference, and still wondering, thanked their strange benefactor. They left the room together.

The Count called after them, running out in the hallway.

"You may think better of my offer tomorrow."

Scarcely had the outer door been closed, when the Count sank forward on the floor. Lederfrank, much relieved by the smooth handling of the delicate matter, was still rubbing his hands in glee, when he heard the thump of a falling body. He went out and discovered the big German prostrated and unconscious.

He ran after Raoul and Paul, shouting: "The Count is dead! Come quickly!—he is dead!"

"Go for Dr. Joumonville!" commanded Raoul, scowling at the nervous Jew. "He has probably only fainted—go on! Don't wait!"

The excitement of the trip, and the flurry and argument over the settlement of the business had brought on an attack of heart disease. The Count

had been warned by his doctor to be careful, but, as in everything else, he did as he liked.

When Raoul and Paul got to him, they found him still breathing. His critical condition was evident. Clerks were called from the general offices of the building, and they carried the Count into the private office and laid him on the couch.

"Go!" he said to those who had borne him in—"leave me with these friends," indicating Raoul and Paul. Paul closed the door.

"I'm dying!—I feel it here," and he held his hand to his side. "The trip was too much. I got excited this——"

Another spell came on, and they thought he was gone, but the wonderful physique of the man, still virile and strong, momentarily snatched him back from the last door.

"This is all—I must talk fast. I have much to say."

"We've sent for the Doctor," said Paul.

"It's no use—a doctor cannot save me. Listen to me, young man—come near me, both of you."

His words were in whisper, and Raoul and Paul knelt by him—to hear.

"Young man, reconsider my offer. But hear me first. M. Beauvais there is not your father."

Raoul jumped to his feet.

Paul looked at the Count, but did not move.

"Listen to a dying man," said the Count. "I'm your father, Paul. M. Beauvais will tell you, you

are the son of a German soldier. Because of that I have been trying to help you in material things. I have done all I could to pay for the wrong."

Raoul Beauvais shook with rage. He could not speak. He glared at the prostrate Count as though he would spring upon him.

"I've built the business with my own money to give it to you, after M. Beauvais' fortune was made. Acknowledge me as your father, and take the business."

The surprised young man could not find words to express his feelings. Hoarsely, he stammered:

"Father, is this true?"

"Yes!" the infuriated man replied. Choose! The rascal is asking you to choose."

"But I can't! This is not true!" cried Paul in anguish.

"It is true!" asserted Raoul.

"Then why didn't you tell me!"

"It is too late to quarrel," said the Count, pleading, "I must hurry. Will you be my son?—will you acknowledge me?"

"No! I'm a Frenchman—I've known no other man as father except this one. I cannot—I will not accept your offer. I have a right to choose—Raoul Beauvais shall always be my father. I don't know this strange tale, but I spurn you, even though you are dying. You insult me with your offer."

"Forgive me, then! I—I——"

Dr. Joumonville came in quickly, and began work-

ing with the man. The tenacious Count opened his eyes again, and there was appeal in every furrowed line of his face.

"You can forgive—come to me, both of you—tell me you forgive me! You, Raoul Beauvais!"

"Whatever he has done, forgive him," said Dr. Joumonville.

"No one knows—not one of my family. The business, yes, but not the other—Lederfrank, yes."

His breathing was more difficult. "Let him die after being forgiven."

But Raoul turned away, and stood by the window.

"Have you ever seen me before?" asked the Count with greater effort.

"Never!" replied Raoul.

Paul looked on, still dazed and horrified.

"Yes, Beauvais, we have met before. You and I fought in the Great War of 1914. We fought each other in the trench one night, in the 'Battle of the Rivers.' We agreed to go each his way, and to meet on 'another battlefield.' We met today, and I leave you the victor—he chooses to be your son!"

The soldier, the determined, forceful nobleman of the Rhine, the man with many faults and gross habits, strangely mixed with good impulses, closed his eyes murmuring:

"I delivered your message, written with my blood; ask her to forgive me!"

CHAPTER XXXII

A NEW BOND

IN the presence of death, while Jacob Lederfrank went to seek the Count's son at the bank, Raoul Beauvais, Paul Beauvais, and Dr. Joumonville sat and reviewed the story of the Invader's Son. Dr. Joumonville told it from the beginning to the end, omitting no detail; and Raoul Beauvais confessed to his disappointment, acknowledged the change Paul had himself wrought, and rejoiced that he had been chosen as the father.

The Invader's Son heard them through; his head bowed, and his thoughts troubled. A veil of mystery was lifted. He saw the reasons for the bitterness and disappointments of the past. A shudder swept his frame when his eyes wandered to the body stretched on the couch. On the horizon of his future, a dark cloud formed, obscuring the way, and changing the bright day of his youth into night. But out of the sadness of his heart—sprang a greater love for Raoul Beauvais. He got up and went over to the foster father, and said:

"Why didn't you send me to a waif's home?—you would have been spared much of your suffering."

Raoul, his eyes glistening with tears, laid his hands on Paul's shoulders, and replied:

"You are my son now!—you've won me bit by bit, and your last act has overwhelmed me. I'm proud of you, Paul! This awful thing has ended and welded a new bond between us. Never ask me why I didn't send you away! Dr. Joumonville has told you—you know the secrets good Father Pelletier and old Dr. Joumonville carried to their graves, and how they regarded the incidents connected with your babyhood; you have seen me struggling to overcome the human prejudices of a father; and you have the fidelity of Dr. Anson Joumonville, who honors you, and is your friend. Forget the past. You are my son forever!—the first in my household, the first in everything. You are the glory of your mother, the noblest woman in France."

Paul wept.

"It is better for me to go now," he said. "I cannot remain longer."

Out into the gloom of the winter's day, cold and dreary from an approaching storm, Paul Beauvais plunged to wander and think. He walked rapidly down the left bank of the Oise, not observing any passerby, and caring not whither he went. His mind was numb with the problem of his life. He was not what people believed him to be—he was nourished by the blood of the enemy of France. Should he marry Mademoiselle Yvonne? Would she not spurn him as he had rejected the nobleman who had dared to crave his filial acknowledgment at death? But it would be easy to break the engage-

ment, for M. Pierre de Robincourt would hotly turn him from the door. How could he endure the sting! Mademoiselle Yvonne, of course, would not marry him—although she could not prevent his love from going on as long as life endured. Oh, the shame of his state!—but not his fault. Why must it be so in the dawn of his manhood? Why could he not have died? Why should he have dreamed, and then had its brilliant lure snatched from him forever? Why should his hopes be so quickly blighted? How much better would it have been had he always known his origin! Why should he, of all men, have written a constitution for the World of Peace? These questions, and a thousand other gloomy thoughts, cluttered his mind, and caused his head to ache. His steps had carried him far out of the city. He trudged along in the deep snow of the river forest, and gave himself over to the feverish fit of his heated brain. Cedar boughs looped the pathway, hovering lower as the falling snow thickened their drapery; the ground, heavily cushioned with millions of feathery flakes, was screened from the cruel pinch of the cold; there was not a tread, or the rumble of a cart, or the roar of a train, to disturb the slumber of nature; flocks of birds huddled in the shelter of evergreens, but not one tried to chirp; and a solid crystal sheet had been spread over the surface of the Oise to muffle the gurgling of the waters.

It was into this haven of quietude, bereft of the

noise of men, of creatures, and of the whispers of things, that Paul Beauvais had come to reconstruct his plans. He stopped and let the peace of the wood fill his soul. Courage began to roll back the murky tide of despair. After a long time, and many sighs and hesitations, he turned and faced Ste. Genevieve again. One thought saved him from a deeper plunge into gloom—always his life had been clean; always his thoughts had been just; always he had been truthful and upright. These were the jewelled bearings in the machinery of his life. Judgment mounted the throne of the young man's mind. "Go, man, and lay your case before Yvonne, for so have men done from the beginning!" the clean-cut faculty said, and Paul Beauvais brightened in countenance, and hastened to retrace his steps. At the edge of the city, he climbed the Heights, and came the quicker to the Château Morestier.

"Mother!" he said, entering the room where Raoul and Hermance were gazing abstractedly on the last act of the enthralling tragedy of their lives, "father has told you. I know all, and yet you have not hated me."

He kissed her, and told her for the millionth time of his unfathomable love, and that he could never forget the debt he owed her—but she dried the burst of tears, and put her hands over his mouth to repress him.

"Nothing matters now, Paul, since Raoul loves you also, and you belong to us forever!"

"Yes, yes; and I'm French—I shall live for you and father and France."

"And for——?"

"Ah, that must yet be decided."

"Must you tell her?" asked Raoul.

"Yes; and will you come with me to M. de Robincourt's?"

"After dinner, this evening."

And in the interval, the body of the Count was removed by his son, Otto, and shipped immediately to the Rhine. The heir did not want any mention of it in the papers, except that required by law.

During the afternoon, also, while Jacob Lederfrank and Otto von Essenhendel were making hurried arrangements, the prospecting engineers of the mines, and the engineer chief entered the office to report on the outcome of their investigations, and especially on the ore reserves. They had been examining the mines for months, and had only completed the work that day. They said the beds of phosphate were exhausted. What had always been considered unlimited banks, proved to be mere pockets of low-grade deposits, which could not be of use in the manufacture of fertilizer. Therefore, the technical advisers said the mines should be closed, and the machinery dismantled and sold while it was yet comparatively new and in good condition.

Lederfrank commenced the winding up of the business. The office staff was set to work to clean out the rubbish of years.

Through Lederfrank, Raoul Beauvais offered to return the purchase price for the shares, but it was refused. The young German said his father knew very well the mines were being investigated, that there was a chance of failure, and he did not propose to undo the last business transaction of the old Count. Everybody had money, and the machinery would pay out all debts.

In the afternoon, a messenger was sent to M. de Robincourt's to announce the coming of Paul and his father in the evening. Hence, when they arrived about nine o'clock, the old Seer of the Oise—and his daughter—waited expectantly, one for an old friend, and one for her lover.

The fire of coals burned brightly in the wide grate in M. Pierre de Robincourt's den. On the table were liquors and cordials, and boxes of cigars. The incandescent lights under colored globes, shed soft brilliancy into every nook of the large chamber, the rendezvous of noblemen and statesmen since the time of Louis XI. The man of iron, his huge body as firm and hard as one of the ancient Gallic warriors, waited impatiently while Raoul Beauvais detailed the story of Paul's origin. The young man sat bolt upright, riveting his eyes on the severe ex-Deputy, and watching the darkening lines on the old fellow's forehead. Only once had de Robincourt said anything since Raoul began, and that was: "The devil and frontier life!" As the tale proceeded, related by a man who was neither sup-

pliant nor favor-seeking, De Robincourt got up and walked stiffly about the clear space before the fire. He showed plainly that he was bored—he wanted it done with. Paul expected him to turn upon them fiercely at any moment, and say: “It is finished!” Raoul concluded without delay, and merely suggested that his son awaited the decision of M. Pierre de Robincourt.

The father and son knew that De Robincourt never did anything in a hurry—his worst blasts of fury were always cruelly poured out after long and cold deliberation. A pause of two minutes followed, with ominous possibilities. Raoul and Paul both glanced helplessly at each other in a sort of defiant resignation.

“Do you like those cigars?” bellowed de Robincourt.

Paul started and dropped the one he had been smoking.

“Have another—they come to me by the thousand,” said the relegated statesman, kicking the fallen cigar into the grate.

Another half minute ticked off, and de Robincourt’s face was as inscrutable as ever.

“I suppose the interview is ended,” said Raoul Beauvais, disdaining to appear anxious to hear what de Robincourt might say.

“No!” said De Robincourt, in his characteristic, explosive style.

“Is there anything further you would know of

me?" asked Paul, his tones suggestive of his injured dignity.

"No!" came the blast again.

It was Raoul Beauvais' turn to assert himself, and he said, with plenty of reserve:

"We take it that a suitable arrangement for recalling the announcement should be made."

"You take nothing, sir, for granted!"

The awkwardness of the situation was becoming dangerous.

Paul's face turned crimson.

"Yvonne!" called the raw-boned giant, and the sound of his voice seemed to go through a dozen rooms.

They heard her footsteps as she came through two sets of halls.

"Yes, papa," she replied, opening a small crack in the door.

"You and Madame de Robincourt may present yourselves in the Norman Room.

"Yes, papa," she said sweetly, and tripped away.

The puzzle deepened. M. Pierre de Robincourt, though terrifying and gruff in speech, was a model of dignity. He was also, on this occasion, a perfect gentleman—a polished representative of the old school. He was probably unconscious of the fact that his voice sounded like the roar of a lion. After Mademoiselle Yvonne had gone, he picked up a bright bottle of precious liquor, and began filling the glasses, while all suspicion of disapproval left him.

"Well!" he said, when each held his goblet, ready to drink, "you would know my answer?"

"Yes," said Paul.

"Young man, I am an Invader's Son of 1870!"

The moment was as if the walls of the palace had suddenly been removed. Raoul and Paul involuntarily arose and stood transfixed.

M. de Robincourt clicked his glass against Raoul Beauvais', saying in his natural voice:

"You and I, sir, will drink to the health of my son-in-law to be!" Then touching Paul's glass with a sharp ring, "And to you, Paul, I drink to the greatest Frenchman of the age. Take her with my blessings!"

A servant tapped at the door. "It is quite ready, sir."

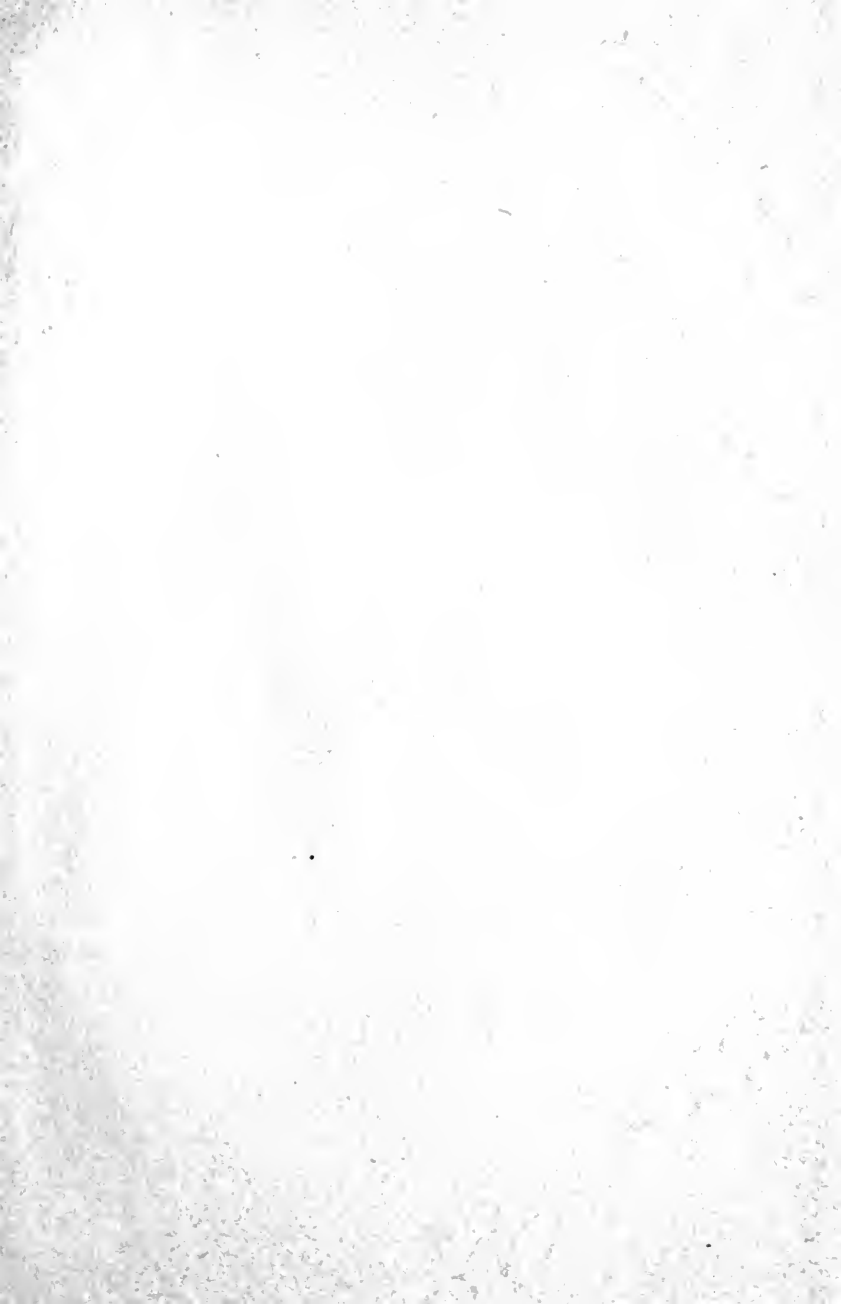
"Come!" said Pierre de Robincourt, "a little supper in the Norman Room will do us good."

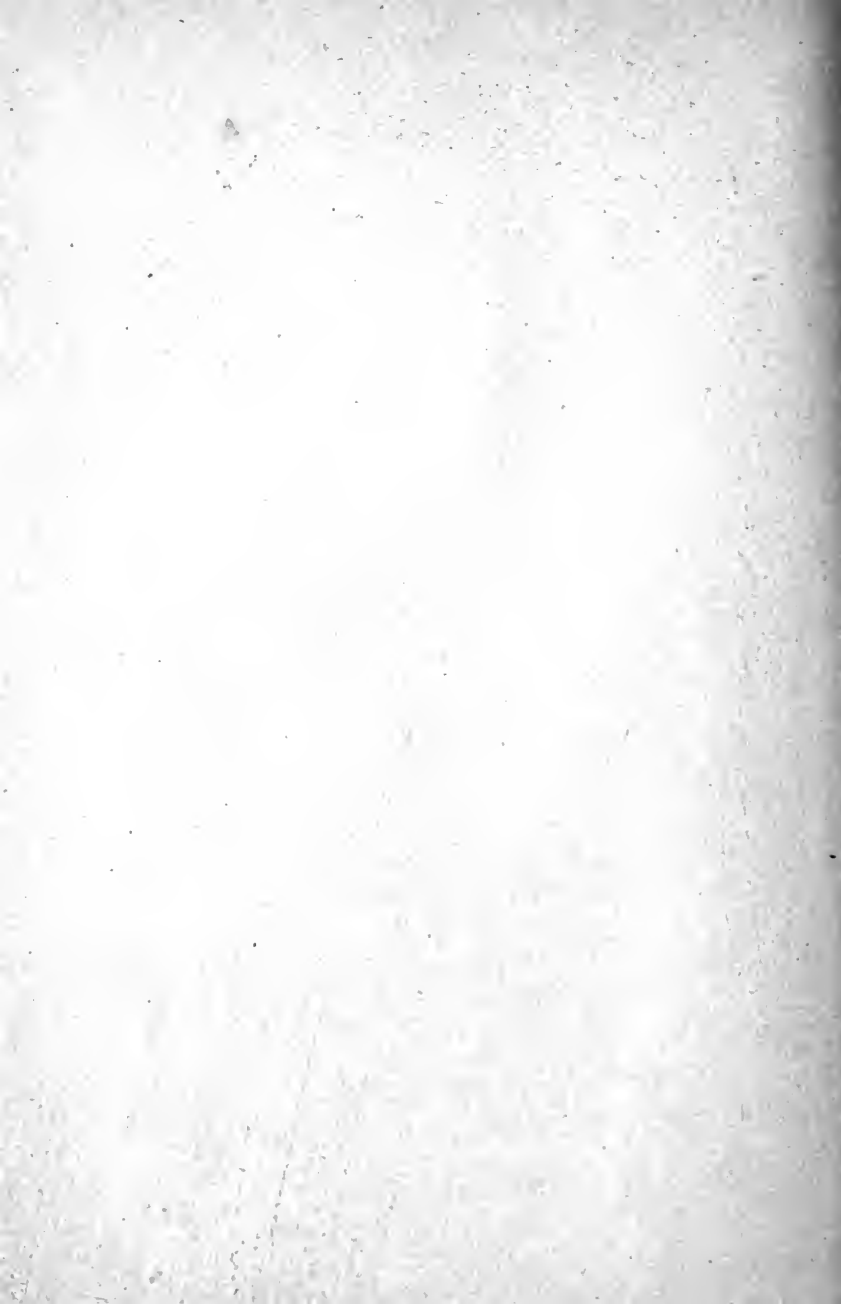
An hour later, while they yet lingered at the table, a messenger arrived from the Château Morestier with a telegram for M. Paul Beauvais. He read it and passed it on to M. de Robincourt, who made known its contents. It was from the President of the International Republic, informing Paul that he had been chosen a member of the first cabinet, as Secretary of State.

"Accept it, sir," said De Robincourt, "you are the man for the place."

THE END.







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